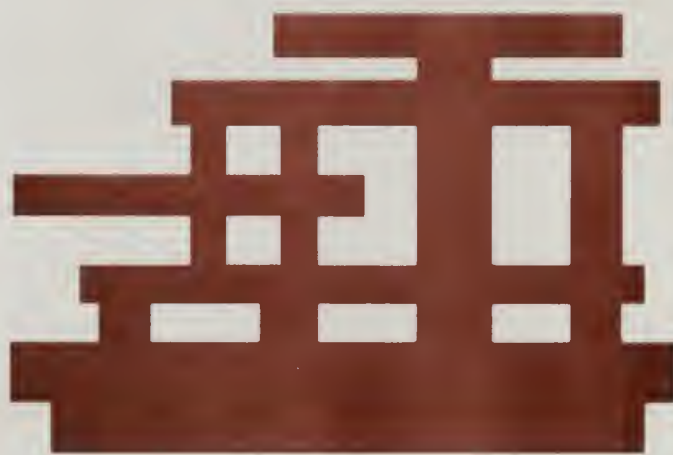


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ARCS



SPRING 1982

VOLUME 6

NUMBER 1

ON MAKING A COVER:

We hope that our cover design suggests the multiple talents of the artists at NSU whose works are exhibited throughout this Spring issue of **Argus**. Like Argus, the Greek mythological hundred-eyed monster, we are ever searching, and **Argus** continually tries to offer artistic ideas that are fresh and interesting and innovative.

James Webb

Gift

When I take up my pen
To chisel an image
From a mountain of words --
I cringe.

When I use my brush
As a tiny net
In a great sea of color and form
To capture the angle, the look, the light --
I agonize.

When I peer through the lens
As my eye
To catch in a blink
A moment's stretch of time --
I tremble.

I will let you tread with heavy feet
On the soft floor of my soul --
Let you sniff and taste, pinch and poke
At my scars and wounds --
Explore with lingering fingers
The love, the pleasure, the fear
I keep hidden here --

but you must know
that this is the most difficult,
and the most important
Gift
i can make.

Jane A. Patterson
Editor

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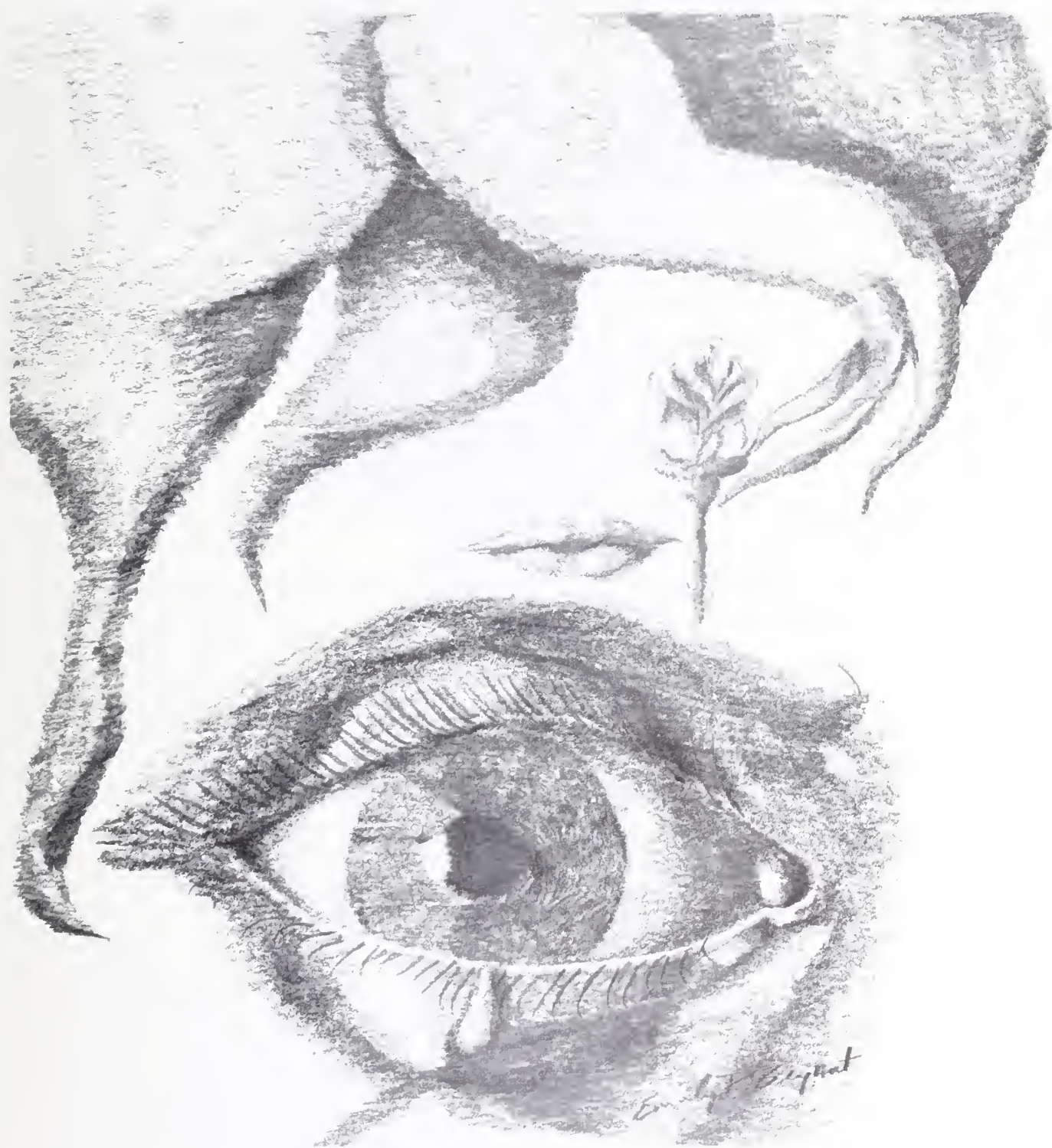


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lonely cotton fields
in neat rows
Mardi Gras trees in bright,
painted costumes
barbed wire fences and
an old abandoned barn
-with a tin roof
pecan trees draped in Spanish moss
bombard the dry grass
with pecan rain
bales of hay define the landscape
a hunter walks down a winding gravel road
the little white church in the woods
multitudes observe the Light Festival
a bayou at sunset
encompassed by cypress stumps

(the projector slides back into the wall)

and we smile
("Shuttle 665 now approaching...")

#503192-AK LOUISIANA IN FALL

Susan Fortenberry

The Stripping Room

I run into the stripping room
fleeing the slashing wind,
to warm my cotton-gloved hands
and numb toes
by the coal glowing stove.

The mash of heat and moist tobacco
smells like warm loaves
of wheat bread, rising
in the oven.

The old men are laughing, busy,
quick hands stripping the
red-brown leaves from the stalk.
They tell farmer's stories
of oxen-strong heroes chopping wood
while waiting, faithful horses
are glazed with ice.



I take my place at the wooden table,
pull a long rich leaf of the
finest red,
hold its wetness to my face,
inhale warm opiate odour,
quickly strip handfuls of middle,
and dry trash.

I wind the long red around the ends,
knotting the broom-like
hand of brown rich Kentucky tobacco,
and smile, as Eylem
teases my husband again,
of the sure fertility
in his winter bed.

Susan Haga

Night Storm

Icy fingers of rain play on my face

The wind hums an unfamiliar tune
A streak of silver lights the heavens momentarily...
then exits

The trees take up the battle dance,
swaying back and forth

A dark canopy covers the earth

All nature is in a fury

Suddenly the turmoil ceases, and all is peaceful

A light fog tiptoes in

The birds take up their melody

A blanket of mist covers the wildflowers

The day begins...

Susan Fortenberry



Ravens, crows, lineman
Perched on a telephone line
Deep in conference.

Etoile M. Nichols



Echoes of my Hometown

The rain washes nothing clean
only makes mud puddles in the road
The thunder, like voices low and distant
sound
like echoes of my hometown.
The rain washes nothing clean
only brings images to mind
The thunder, like voices sad and tired
sound
like echoes of my hometown.

David L. Ulmer



Hope Springs

She was a girl with lovely golden eyes
And hair of blackbird shining silvery sheen.
Her lips were made for smiles and love and lies;
Her carriage more than equaled any queen.
One day her invitation came for tea
All written on a pretty perfumed page - -
I hardly dared to hope it was for me,
For both of us were at a tender age.
I loved her with a love divinely rare
And planned to ask that she with me elope;
And yet I wondered could I ever dare
To carry out my dream of love and hope.
 She only wanted me so she could send
 A lengthy loving letter to my friend.

Virginia Godfrey

Looking Back

I can still see the way
His hair hung in his eyes
Nervous movements brushing it away
Fine formed legs protruding
Awkwardly from too short pants and
Stockings that did not hide them
From my view.

Noreen Van Meter

THE RETIREMENT OF JAMES PETRIE

By Chip Bailey

The lonely shadow rocked back and forth near the center of the room. In the far corner, a television whispered the early morning news. At six-thirty, it was still dark outside.

It was the first day of James Petrie's forced retirement, just two weeks before his sixty-fifth birthday, and he wasn't looking forward to it. Cracker, his ten-year-old Pekingese born on Independence Day, lay asleep in his lap.

The look on Petrie's youthful face told the frustration as he tried to figure out what he would do with the rest of his life. Money wasn't a problem. He had quite a bit tucked away in savings, not to mention the \$800,000 he received from the insurance companies following his wife's accidental death.

The thought of being relegated to a rocking chair on the front porch of a nursing home sent shrill chill bumps down his spine.

"No!" he said, almost yelling, slapping his hand against the arm of the chair. "I won't throw the rest of my life away. They're not going to just give me a gold watch and put me out to pasture. Cracker, it's just you and me now. We've got to make something of the time we have left here. We just have to!"

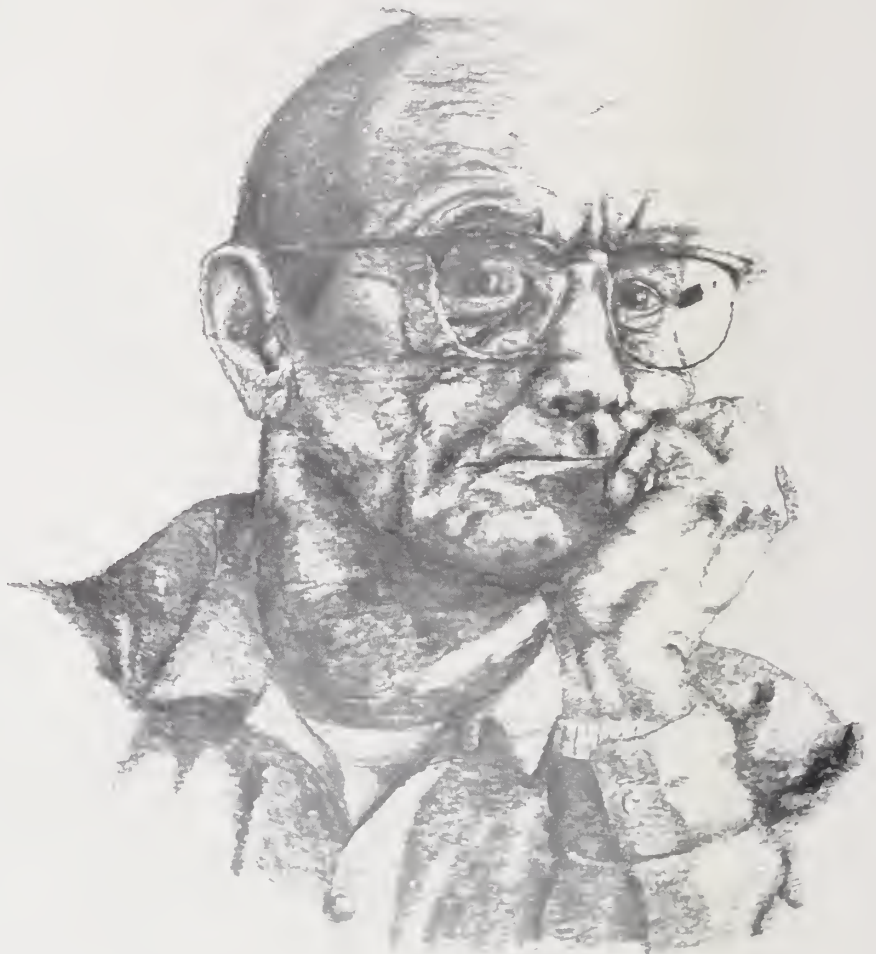
At that instant there was a tremendous blast from the direction of NASA, whose vast layout was just a few thousand yards from Petrie's back yard. Petrie's mind had been so focused on his retirement and future, he had forgotten NASA had scheduled a test satellite launching.

Cracker jumped from Petrie's lap and scooted under the couch as Petrie hurried out the back door to check on the confusion. Standing silently in the doorway, Petrie looked anxiously skyward and watched the strange contraption

float away from earth's gravity. As the object disappeared from his sight, Petrie's face turned from fright and uncertainty to a radiant gleam.

His search for an answer was over!

"Cracker, come on out from under there," he commanded as he turned away from the doorway. "We're going to build us a rocket and go into space."



Cracker, still frightened from the loud blast, peeked her face from under the couch as if to say, "Are you crazy?"

Petrie got on the phone to his realtor and told him he would need a large area of land to do some rocket experiments for the government. The realtor had just the place; he had been trying to unload it on someone for the past thirteen months. It was a seventy-

five acre abandoned air base about thirty miles south of Cape Kennedy. The area had already been fenced in, and the facilities there would allow him to move everything and live there.

Petrie went to look at the land the next day and decided almost instantly to purchase it. The deal was consummated and Petrie began moving the same day. In less than a week, he and Cracker were established in their new home.

In one of the base's strategy rooms, Petrie had set aside nearly all the books and drawings he had gathered during his twenty-one years as chief construction engineer for Boeing and design consultant to NASA. Plans and blueprints were hanging on the walls alongside personal momentos, including numerous awards for excellence and expertise.

He was a master at construction and, in fact, was responsible for many of the designs for future spacecraft now being tested at NASA. Petrie was familiar with how to build his dream, and he had the monetary means, but he didn't have the necessary materials at his fingertips.

Of course, he still had his security pass to go in and out of almost any building at NASA, and he might be able to get some of the components from there. But the authorities might become suspicious if a large amount of equipment and tools turned up missing.

With that in mind, he decided to get what he could from NASA and travel across the country to find the remaining parts he needed.

Two months of grueling travel and three thousand miles later, Petrie finally had all of the necessary material to begin construction of his homemade rocket. He could now put to use all the expertise and knowledge that he had gathered during his

successful career with Boeing and NASA.

He was ready to get started, yet there was still a touch of resentment in his heart. He knew he could still handle the work, that he wasn't too old. But at sixty-five, as he had seen happen to many of his friends previously, Boeing just hands you a gold watch and sends you on your way, regardless of your previous accomplishments.

It was now early March, and Petrie had set a launch date of August thirty-first.

On March ninth, he sat at a table in the planning room rubbing his hands together briskly. Outside, a mild wind swept a drizzling rain across the deserted base, and Petrie could hear Cracker running around in the next room, probably knocking a ball about and chasing it. Glancing at the numerous construction plans hanging on the surrounding walls, he wondered how he could do so much work and have plenty of time to run the necessary tests on his invention.

"I can't waste any time, none whatsoever," he thought to himself. "Even so, five and a half months is hardly enough time to get the job done right. I'll have to work twenty-five or twenty-six hours a day...or..."

Petrie sat with his elbows on the table, running his hands through his thick, grayish-white hair. As he sat thinking, Cracker wandered in from the next room.

"What you think?" Petrie said as he looked around to see the beautiful chestnut-colored dog. "Do you think we can trust ol' Joe? Would he be loyal, or do you think he might run to the police?"

Cracker stood up on her hind legs and barked twice.

Petrie paused to continue his thinking. Ol' Joe had been a close friend, both professionally and personally, for many years. He was retired, too, and since he had recently quit his job as a part-time cashier at a convenience store, he

would probably be looking for a good project to work on and a few extra dollars.

"I know it will be hard to do all the work by myself in just a few months," he mumbled under his breath.

But he couldn't help but wonder if he let someone else in on the secret, how long it would remain a secret. He sat at the table rather nervously and fidgety for the next few minutes as the room grew quiet.

The calm and quiet nearly put Cracker to sleep, but a loud slap of Petrie's hand against the table brought her to life quickly.

"I've got it!" he yelled. "We'll get ol' Joe to help us. But nothing says we've got to tell him what we're really doing. We'll tell him we're working on a project for the government, that we're building a full-scale model for display."

Petrie got on the phone to Joe immediately, still thinking of how he would explain his proposition.

"Say, Joe, Jim Petrie here. Listen, ah, I've been chosen to do a secret project for the government, and I've got just a short period of time to do it in. We're building a full-scale model of a rocket ship. It's called Citation 13x and it's Top Secret. I was wondering, Joe, with your mechanical background, if you would like to put in eight to ten hours a day helping me."

"Well, I don't know, Jim," Joe responded hesitantly. "That sounds like a lot of work, and I don't know if I'm up to it or not."

"Joe, I'll use you on the lower section, and it's just basic construction you'll be doing," Petrie continued. "I'll handle all the minute details."

"Well, I really don't have much else to do," Joe rationalized. "And it really would be nice to work with you again. Kind of like old times."

"Yeah, together again," Petrie said. "Sure, and it would take you

only eight or ten weeks. What do you think?"

"Tell you what, Jim, we'll give it a shot for a few weeks. Sounds like we might have some fun," Joe said.

"Fine," Petrie replied. "We'll get started day after tomorrow."

The first ten days of construction passed quickly, and the rocket was taking shape magnificently, just as the frame of a new house sprouts up almost overnight. The seventy-foot rocket was divided into two sections--each housed in separate buildings--and they would not be connected until the night of the launch so as not to draw the attention of passersby or make Joe suspicious.

Petrie focused most of his efforts on the command module section, working twenty hours a day. By August first, he had finished the major construction and was now installing, programming and testing the two on-board computers. Petrie kept Joe away from the command module after the first couple of days, making for a natural curiosity.

Ol' Joe had progressed very fast with the construction of the lower booster section. Practically all that was left was the wiring and a few minor details in connecting and making operational the rocket systems.

On August nineteenth, a brisk Tuesday morning, Ol' Joe came to work about eight-thirty. He was wearing his usual navy blue jumpsuit with "NASA" sewed onto the front and was clean shaven for the first time in two weeks. Petrie was installing the main on-board computer in the command module in Building 23C.

When he arrived at Building 19, Joe looked across the way and saw Petrie on a fork lift carrying a large crate into the building where the command module was being built. The door closed behind him. The curiosity continued to gnaw at Joe.

Finally, Joe just had to know. He

hurried over to the building, looking left and right, as if he thought someone might be watching. The large metal door was locked. He sneaked around the building until he came to a partially open window. It was ten feet off the ground, so he rolled an empty barrel underneath it and pulled himself up to where he could see inside.

He could hardly believe his eyes. It looked like something right out of Star Wars, a shiny white space capsule with bright blinking lights from computers and an elaborate system of television monitors.

To the right of the capsule was a giant computer, and above it, hanging from the ceiling, was a large TV screen. Still further around was a huge circular table with a control panel, with a place in the center for what looked like one person to sit. "Some model," he mumbled under his breath, shaking his head and wondering what he should do. Then, realizing it was probably more than what he originally thought, he began walking hurriedly toward his car.

When he reached the corner of the building, Petrie stepped out and cut him off.

"Where you going in such a hurry?" Petrie asked.

Ol' Joe, obviously nervous and shaken, stammered around without giving an answer.

"I saw you peeking in the window and figured you might want a first-hand look," Petrie said, grabbing him by the shoulder.

Since Joe had become overly suspicious, Petrie had decided to take him into his confidence and see how he would react. After a detailed look at the impressive ship, Ol' Joe seemed scared, but finally asked hesitantly, "I thought we were building a model. I mean, the computers, the TV monitors, control panels...they all look so real, so life-like."

"That's because they are," Petrie

replied. "We're going to take it into space."

"We?" Joe said timidly, looking around for an exit.

"Yep, those are the plans," Petrie said. "In fact, it'll be just a few days now."

Joe didn't like those plans and didn't want any part of them, so he told his old friend, "Look, Jim, I'm sixty-seven years old. I figure I got some years left here, and I'd just soon live them on solid ground. So, I'll go back to minding my own business and let you have your fun. You don't need me anyway. Good luck, okay?"

With that he turned to walk away, but Petrie, much bigger and stronger, grabbed him by the shoulder. "Joe, I can't let you do that. Now I don't want to hurt you, but I can't let you go out and possibly have the police back here in an hour or so either."

Ol' Joe was horrified. He hadn't realized what he had gotten into, but he sure wished he was somewhere else.

"Listen, Jim, you know me, I won't go to the police," Joe said. "I'll tell you what. I'll take a trip. Yeah, I'll go to California or somewhere until you get through with your project. Then, when you are finished, I can come back."

"Sorry, Joe," Petrie replied, shaking his head. "We've been friends for a long time, but I just couldn't take a chance on letting my secret out. We're the only ones that know about this. I'm just trying to cover all my tracks."

Petrie took his old friend to the jail section of the base and locked him in one of the cells, where he would stay until the launch date in ten days. Petrie fed his friend daily and even stopped by to fill him in on the progress from time to time. Joe realized no one would be looking for him. He remembered telling friends and neighbors he was taking a vacation, because Petrie had told him the project was Top

Secret, and he wanted to keep his true whereabouts secret also.

Days passed and Petrie worked continually putting the final touches on his masterpiece. Finally, on August twenty-ninth, in the middle of the afternoon, he had concluded his construction, installation, and most of the tests. All that was left to do was to connect the booster stage to the command module and he would be ready to go.

Petrie was proud of the finished version and he wanted Joe to see it, so he went to get him. But Joe was not there. He had used some thick wire from the rocket construction to open the lock. Petrie knew now that he must hurry and move his launch time up, unsure of whether Joe would go to the police or not.

Immediately, he took the giant crane and began work on putting the rocket together. It would take some time, probably eight to ten hours, but that would be all right; he didn't want his rocket to be fully complete until after nightfall so as not to draw much attention.

By midnight, his task was finished. Petrie, still realizing his need to hurry, relaxed just a moment to take in the glorious sight, the beautiful glistening craft with the name "Citation 13x" inscribed on her side.

"It's spectacular, isn't it, Cracker," Petrie said with a sense of accomplishment. "And those people at Boeing said I was too old. Hah!!"

Petrie had moved his launch to six-thirty that morning, so he had just a few hours to run some final tests and confirm "all systems go." He couldn't have asked for a better day, not a cloud in the sky and the winds were even calm.

Ol' Joe had become scared. He didn't know if he might be involved in a matter of national security or not. He was torn between turning Petrie in or letting him blast his rocket into space. Finally, he went

to the police, who at first dismissed him as a crazy lunatic. After an hour of interrogation by several detectives, Joe convinced the police to have a look at the abandoned air base.

A short time later, Petrie heard a distant sound of sirens. He figured he had maybe fifteen minutes, if indeed they were headed to stop him.

The countdown started. Petrie fired the engines for a test. The rocket jets lit up the early morning darkness, and he could lift off at anytime, with a simple push of a button.

Cracker, panting heavily from the excitement, sat in his lap. He could see the lights from the cars a few miles across the base.

"Hold on, Cracker," Petrie said. "Here we go!"

And with a push of the button, the "Citation 13x" headed skyward. Petrie could still see the cars, but they were all stopping erratically, and the policemen were jumping out of their cars for a glimpse of the sight. The authorities sealed off the base immediately, and no one, not even military personnel or detectives, would be allowed inside until some order could be restored.

Tracking stations around the world were alerted and were now following the craft. NASA, which was coordinating all rescue and tracking operations worldwide, released a bulletin an hour after launch saying the rocket had established orbit.

All major television networks were carrying special coverage of the extraordinary event. Police around the world, including the FBI and the CIA and all U.S. troops had been put on full alert. NASA had even attempted contact with the ship, but only in vain.

In the third day of flight, NASA picked up some signals from an unknown source in space. They were a set of coordinates, giving

the point of entry in Earth's atmosphere and the touchdown point, just south of the Louisiana coast, in the Gulf of Mexico.

The military and civilian police could only assume that was where Petrie had decided to end his voyage. Half of the American naval fleet was summoned there, as were army and air force patrols. Everyone wanted to be the first to arrest Petrie.

On Friday morning, September second, at ten, they all thought they would have their chance when their attention was drawn to a small white dot floating from the sky.

Radar confirmed it as the runaway capsule, and it was coming down at the precise coordinates. Coast Guard cutters, Navy rescue ships, and private law enforcement officers converged on the capsule.

The captain of the U.S.S. Nimitz took control of the rescue operations at the scene.

"Okay, Mr. Petrie," the captain yelled over a public address system. "Come on out of there with your hands up. Right now!"

Several minutes passed without so much as a sound from inside. The command module continued bobbing up and down on the choppy waters as members of the rescue team became impatient. Medical personnel aboard the navy ships began to worry about Petrie's health and safety and urged the forced opening of the capsule.

It took three men thirty minutes to unlock and force the door open. When they finally pried it open, the capsule was empty.

The opening of the door had triggered one of the on-board computers with a taped message that was repeating itself over and over: "I am because I can. Never give up on a man until he can't...I am because I can. Never give up..."

Spring's City Dirge

She stood there
doing her ironing
staring out the window
at the city
and the faceless people
walking in the rain
beneath the mock-garden
of her window box
Something caught her ear
maybe a siren
no...someone was speaking
someone was calling her
begging her to return
to her home in the hills
She stood there
shaking her head
trying to be rid of the voice
her hand was
feeling the cloth
she ironed
it was smooth
and hot under her
hand that still showed
scars of days spent
picking berries
under the sweet hot
spring sun
Something touched her palm
it was no longer the man-made fibers
she ironed
but cotton or wool
or perhaps delicate Irish linen
brought by a long lost friend
lost in the rush
of the city's infinite
maze of sidewalks and freeways
toll roads and bridges
She stood there
awakened from
her daydreams of fields
she once owned with her soul
and the taste of dew on the
fresh morning grass of
summertimes past
facing the reality
of the smell of rain
on the cold pavement
and scorching tears on polyester...



Why

Why at this time each afternoon
do I find myself at this window
watching?

Why do I listen
and listen for that voice
at morning and at night?

Why can't I loose the bonds
of remembering?

Why can't I reach for the fragile strands
of forgetting?

Why can't I accept grief, silence, loneliness,
and go on and on and on...

etale M. Nishida

Sounds In The Night

deep 100%
heavy silence (
-eats

at my sanity
shattered

?monster ???
?
hey.

i'm not scared
not scared

i'm

Susan Fortenberry

Senior Citizens on a Tour at the Sea of Galilee

The women stood
looking at the sea
so endless.

They wondered
how much longer they
would see

the sea, the sun, each other.

One wished
she had been a better person.

One wished
she had more to show for a life of
hard work.

One wished for
the promise of tomorrow.

They all wanted
life eternal.

Amaryllis T. Nabavi

Reality

The tapestry of time
weaves in and out;
Beginnings, old and new,
renew;
Ruins guide our way,
silent sentinels
as we search.

Susan Dollar

September

What triumph do you hold
As your raiment turns to scarlet and to gold

What secret do you share
With summer's promise, swift and fair

What measures have you yet
When autumn's harvest has been set

What solace do you find
With winter's distance close to mind?

Marjorie Fontenot

Poem

Look at me! I'm writing a poem!

You? After threescore and more years of life?

You? After teaching students half that many years?

You? After raising a family and yet grandsons to go?

You? After days of dusting, mopping, mowing, and meetings?

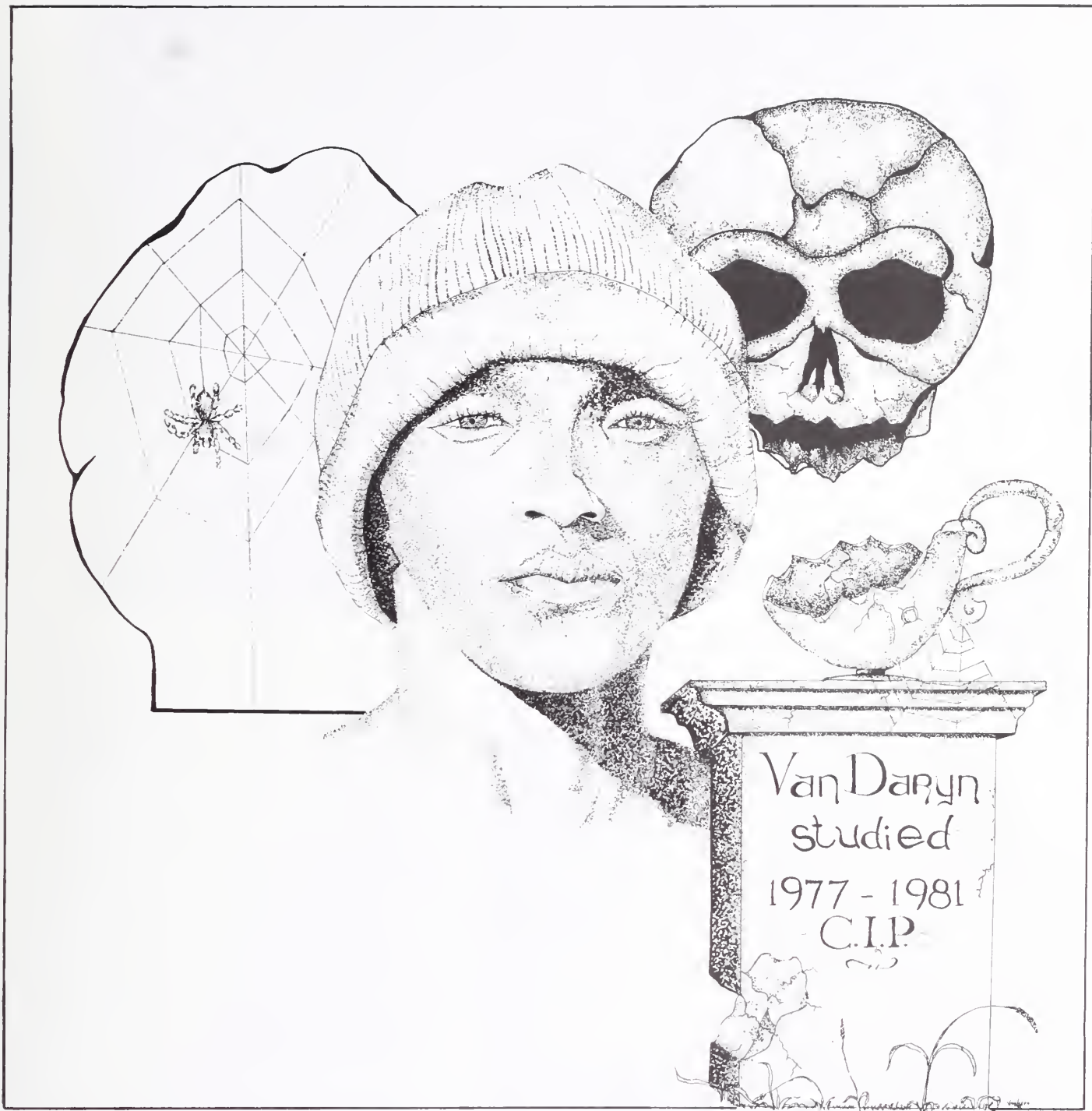
Yes! Me!

I want everyone to know

That I can still laugh and share.

That I can still cry and care.

Etoile Nichols



NYC Hasid

walking down 48th Street in the direction
of 5th Avenue: the Diamond District.
two school busses park and one hundred
Hasidic men pour out. Black.
black shoes, black pants, black sweaters,
black overcoats falling almost to the black shoes,
black hats. Black.
long beards and earlocks.
on windy days a flock of angry crows
descending on 48th Street.
on calm days a row of clothespins,
all black.

Buffy DeVeau



Bag Ladies' Niche

Tin cans with careless covers,
awaiting fumbling fingers, lean beside
Plastic bags hurriedly tied,
anticipating luring eyes, while
Battered boxes, lacking topses,
gasp in hope for hands that grope, and
Paper sacks of sweetshop scraps
dream in sleep...for...keeps.

Kenneth Woodard



Discrimination, Segregation, Apathy...

There are meetings being held
 that you know nothing about
 You have a lot to contribute
 and we are missing out.
 Sure, people will always complain
 saying what they would have done;
 But when authority comes
 they are the first to run.
 There are people at the meetings
 that are trying to take over.
 So, will you please come
 and place some of the weight on your shoulder.
 Discrimination, Segregation, Apathy...
 can fill you with doubt.
 That's why we need you,
 at that meeting you know nothing about.

Robert A. Jackson

Peace?

Across the ashen sky
Soared a white dove.
Dipping
 and diving
 enjoying the flight through the
 chilly air.
The gentle bird was happy and peaceful
Until
 a blood-hungry hunter
 spotted the bird,
 and pierced him through the heart
 with a single shot.
The bird fell to the ground.
It died, struggling to survive.
Its white feathers
 now streaked with dirt
 and blood.

Julie Snowden

Leopold

Aliza always loved a parade
A happy go lucky girl of fourteen she was then
Dark hair, dark eyes, pleasant smile
And so she went to see the soldiers
in perfect rhythm, march and sing;

“When the blood of the JEWS
will be on our knives
THAT will be twice as good.”
And being a Jew, Aliza was stricken
at hearing the soldier’s song.

Time goes on and we move forward
The memory of Aliza’s family fades
New lives have risen from broken ones
In our day, the infamous lie is told,
Six million Jews did not die.

Wouldn’t it be a little more human
to the Mahlers, Lehrs, Kornfelds, and Zuckermanns
When their loved ones painfully recall
Terezin, Lodz Ghetto, Auschwitz, and Matthausen
We simply admit their words are true.

Marie Parham

War is Hell

War is Hell

Yet we crave it

For the unsung glories

To peak those past

To hear of it

Whets one's desire

To seek danger and excitement

For the unsung glories

To peak those past

Once there

Among its gore

The stomach curdles

No longer yearning

For the unsung glories

To peak those past

The man next to you dies

Your heart sinks inside

The stench of your clothes stings

For the unsung glories

To peak those past

A cry of desperation echoes from afar

It does not chill your blood

Since your mind is numb

How ironic, the taste is bitter

For the unsung glories

To peak those past

Where are all the heroes

The ones who could tell

The ugly and unattractive truth

To burst the adolescent dream

For the unsung glories

To peak those past

They shan't appear

History grinds them into dust

While the medal-bearing Adonises

Proudly proclaim

Go search

For the unsung glories

To peak those past

Pity us God

Our ignorance is our bliss

Blindly we forge on

For the unsung glories

To peak those past

It is our doom

To repeat the errors of before

Only judgment day

Will quench our thirst

For the unsung glories

To peak the past

A Louisiana Childhood

Louisiana is my childhood state;
Multitudes of memories fill my mind;
A creek, a pole, a worm I used for bait
And huckleberry treasures I could find.
Magnolias, pines and oaks and dogwood trees,
Old barns and fences with decaying rails,
The flowers honeysuckling honey bees.
Train tracks and other long-forgotten trails.
When evening fell some sounds would just begin:
Louisiana woke its whippoorwills,
And just before the raindrops pattered tin.
I'd fall asleep to frog and cricket trills.

Diane Foster

Winter Rye

Weaving lawns in Autumn litter
Threads of rain hold no longer.

Rumors of Winter fall on yards
Dead in the wind, for reason. For rain.

Some are falling dry. All are dying,
Thirsting for the winter, the wrap, the rye.

Allen Ford



Corporal Kruger's Death Tree" a Photograph by Michael Matherne

Baby Dolce

A baby boy is
born again. . .
and time flies
'til he's grown.
The rooster crows,
the wise men know
that life and love
are one.
A baby cries,
an old man dies,
The cycle has just
begun.

Ellen Dollar



Journey

Welcome to the Alligator Forest,
just follow the path
through this wood of writhing limbs.
The clear blue pools
are just ahead.
Watch out for the snapping jaws
on the way. . .
. . . only a short while to go
to get to the peaceful, cool
water,
the mother womb,
embryonic bliss.

Susan Dollar

Him

His giant hand held my small, white, delicate one.
His beard tickled my cheek as he kissed me goodnight.
His embrace reassured me as he placed me between my bed covers.
As he read aloud to me from the story book, I watched his gentle face. The
 wrinkles that time had etched in his skin, the soft brown eyes that held
 all the mysteries I longed to be a part of.
I looked at him and I saw myself.
I reached out and he was there.
He put down the book.
He stroked my soft hair.
He hugged me.

Tracy Bedell

Brian

Cradled in white sheets,
barely alive.
Can this pale, frail body
once more be filled with youthful exuberance?

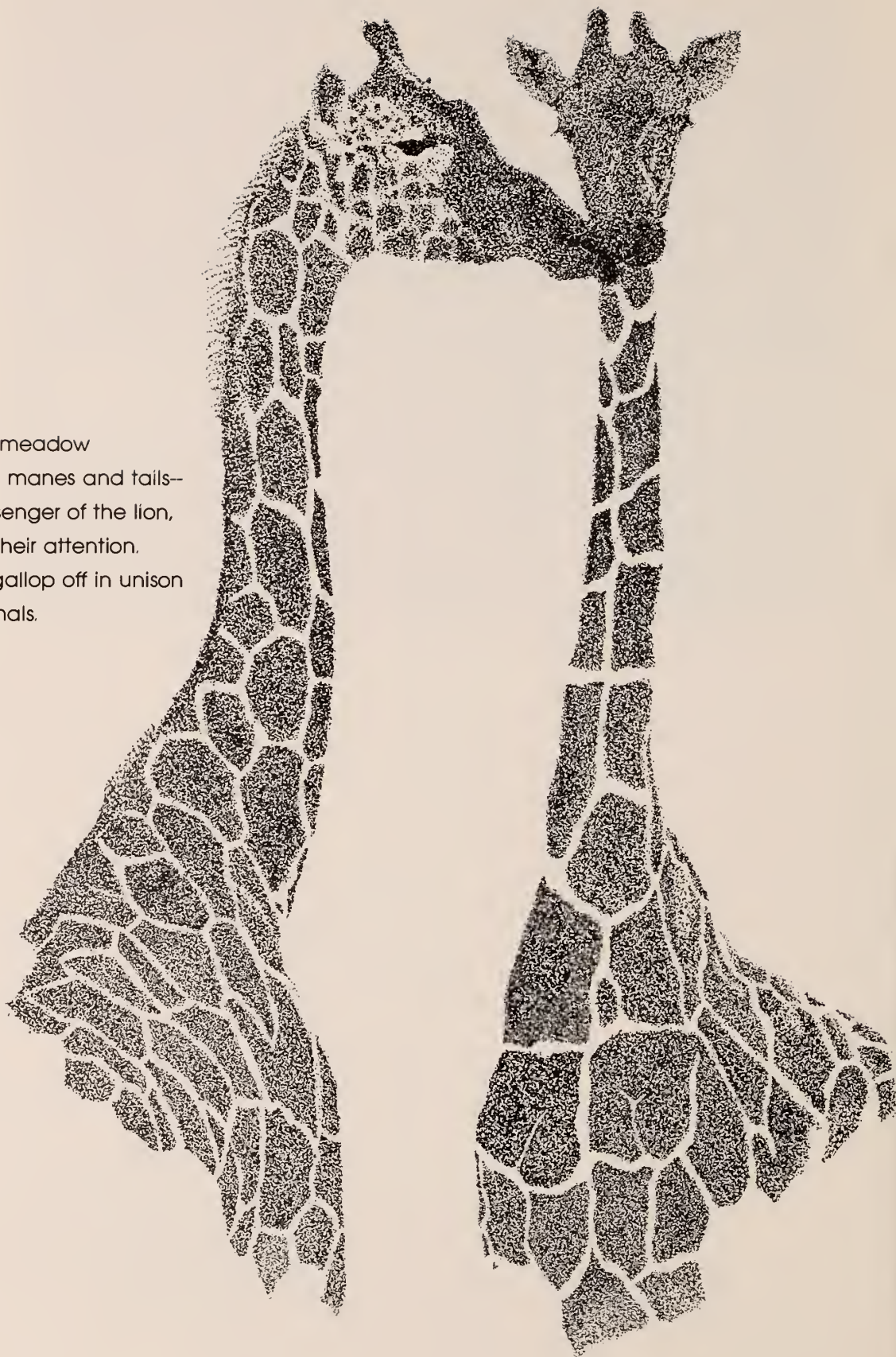
After a year of wheelchairs and therapy
a new boy walks into our lives.
Spastic limbs and slurred softened speech
cannot mask the gleam of excitement
in his bright brown eyes.

Buffy DeVeau

Meeting of the Animals

Unicorns cavorting in the meadow
Sunlight playing off silvery manes and tails--
A golden eagle, the messenger of the lion,
flies over them catching their attention.
One trumpets, and they gallop off in unison
For a meeting of the animals.

Lee Anne Shackelford



Life

Girls and dolls and make-believe
A world of smiles and curls,

Books and art and love-delight
A world of sound and sight,

Strength and test and goal-intent
A world of will and stride,

Joy and rage and calm-content
A world of ebb and tide.

Marjorie Fontenot

Puppies

Tumbling around on wobbly legs
Staggering, falling, like walking on eggs
Nipping, nuzzling, and growling in play
Playing and sleeping through the entire day
Fat little bundles of quivering fur
Smelling of puppy breath, that's for sure
There's nothing so cute or so dear
As a warm soft puppy licking your ear.

R Elaine Hale

HARRIETA

D.C. Waters

During the first spring of the several years I stayed with Uncle Ray, a little black and tan bitch came up to the house, wagging her tail and smiling timidly at us. She didn't have a hair on her body and her ribs stuck out to remind you of pictures of beached whales, but she was wagging that tail and grinning. Right off we decided that some unscrupulous hunter had thrown her away rather than go to the expense of taking her to the vet and trying to get her embarrassing problem cleared up. The poor girl was about starved to death. Like so many other thrown-away dogs, she had probably waited where she had been put out for her master to return. Waited until expectancy turned to misery and then desperation drove her off to try to find food. Undoubtedly she had been running through the woods from farmhouse to farmhouse trying to make a living, or maybe find a home, and had been turned away again and again. Barely more than a pup, she still had hope in her eyes and needed love as much as food and medical care.

She was in luck. Even though Uncle Ray had given up coon hunting after an accident some years back, he was still a soft touch for a black and tan. And since this one had such an appealing, even intelligent look about her hairless head, it didn't take much begging and cajoling from us kids before Uncle Ray consented to at least take her to the vet and see if she could be saved.

Old Dr. Jones took some skin scrapings and other tests and then triumphantly diagnosed worms, starvation and mange. When he said we had barely found her in time and started pulling out vials of pills and bottles of shampoo and dip to cure her with, Uncle Ray

sighed in relief, and Johnny, Susie and I had a giggling fit of delight.

Lots of love, food, and a strict attendance to the schedules of baths, dips, and pills had a thin fuzz of hair peeking through on the black and tan when she went for her checkup the following week. Dr. Jones was real pleased with our progress and asked what we'd named her. There'd been considerable discussion over this, what with Johnny wanting to call her "Happy" and me wanting something more dignified like "Lady" and Susie wanting something sissy like "Missy Dolly" and Uncle Ray not quite satisfied with any of these choices.

Old Dr. Jones smiled and said, "I'd call her Harrieta."

We just looked at him.

"Well, she's going to be hairy, isn't she?" he asked.

"Harrieta," Uncle Ray repeated, thinking on it. It stuck.

With all the good food and attention showered on Harrieta, she grew fat and happy. She was a great pal to us kids - gentle and watchful, yet playful. We included her in all our games and kept her bathed and brushed so Aunt Gladys would let her in the house. After a time, Aunt Gladys got to where she'd sneak Harrieta a biscuit in the morning if she thought no one was looking. But Harrieta was Uncle Ray's dog. She would follow him every evening when he went to check on the cows, and she shadowed his every footstep. Sometimes, when we would be playing tag or hide-and-go-seek, Uncle Ray would start for the pasture. Then Harrieta would turn and look at us real mournful, as if to say, "Sorry, but this is my duty." And then she'd wag her tail and bound off after Uncle Ray. He doted on her, fondling her long silky

ears when he would sit on the porch swing at night and she would rest her head on his knee. I guess Harrieta kinda reminded Uncle Ray of his younger years, before he hurt his leg and had to give up so much that he liked to do. Sometimes, it seemed like they were sitting out there on the porch talking over old times like old friends, as if Harrieta had shared Uncle Ray's past.

Often Harrieta would go off on a hunt by herself, chasing some varmint or other through the muddy slough in back of the house. She would serenade us with her beautiful crystal-clear bay while she hunted, and Uncle Ray said that song was worth every penny he'd spent to get her healthy. When she was out hunting like that Johnny and I could call her until we were hoarse and she'd play like she didn't hear, but let Uncle Ray pull in the drive from work and toot the horn on his old pickup and here Harrieta would come running, panting and grinning and wagging her tail so hard her body would shake like a hula dancer.

One of the most touching things about Harrieta was her gratitude. Of course, those first terrible days all she could think of was filling her starved belly. But after about a week, every time her food dish was put before her, she would sniff at it and then look up at you with those liquid brown eyes, smile and wag her tail. She looked so humble and thankful. The first time she did this I had to hide my face from Johnny; I just felt so sorry for her past suffering I couldn't help but cry. As long as we had Harrieta, she always thanked us for her dinner.

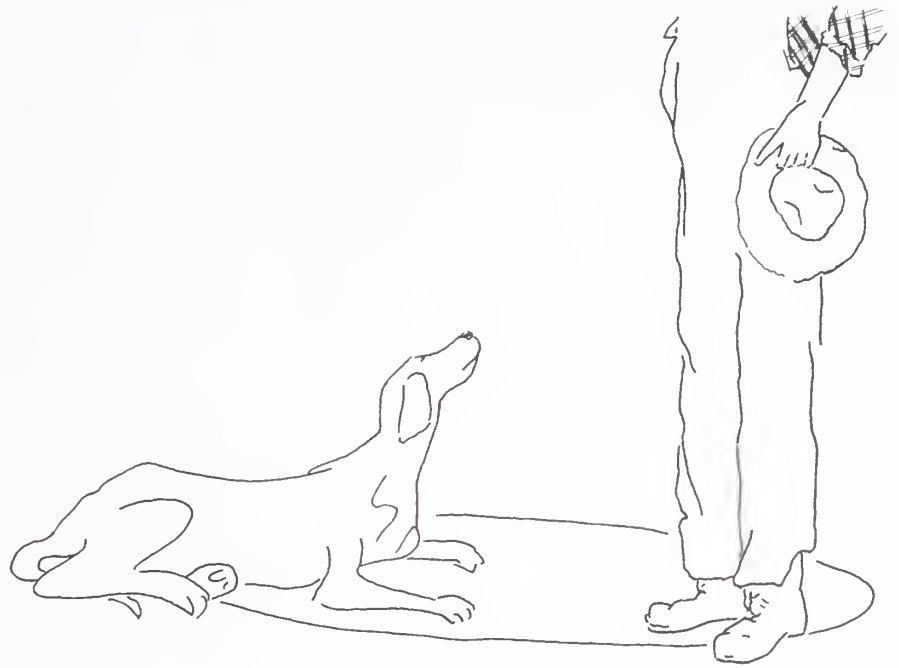
As Harrieta reached her peak of health, our neighbors would stop and admire the "fine-boned little

black and tan bitch" we'd taken in, and they were amazed that she had done so well. The old men that had shaken their heads and said Uncle Ray was foolish for not putting her out of her misery were now looking a little jealous and probably secretly wishing they hadn't let their wives run Harrieta off their doorsteps with a pan of scalding water.

Our young neighbor, Bill McCall, made Uncle Ray, who was pretty hot-tempered, furious one day by offering him a hundred dollars for Harrieta if she would run deer. Uncle Ray hated hunting deer with dogs and contended that most people who would stoop to such sport shouldn't own a dog anyway 'cause they wouldn't take care of it. Although this was often as not true, Bill had some fine looking deer dogs, and they were always sleek and healthy-looking.

This little exchange got Uncle Ray to worrying. Deer season would be opening soon, and as Harrieta ran free around our woods with only her collar bearing Uncle Ray's name and phone number as protection, she was subject to being abducted by any dishonest dog thief who wanted to recruit her for the hunting season. This thought tormented Uncle Ray. I think it was not only the thought of losing Harrieta, though that was bad enough, but the idea of her being taken by those "damned inhumane" deer hunters that drove him crazy. He could just picture her cold and miserable in a dog run, being fed dog bread and scraps and wondering what had happened to her family. Harrieta, who always slept on a mat by Uncle Ray's bed and was used to eating plenty of dog chow and Aunt Gladys' biscuits.

Harrieta always stayed pretty close to the house. Even if she was out on a hunt when us kids got home, the minute Uncle Ray drove up in his old pickup and honked, she'd come running in. And so one



evening about the middle of November when Uncle Ray drove up and honked and Harrieta didn't show up, a knot swelled up in my stomach right away. Uncle Ray received his usual mauling from Johnny and Susie and then straightened up and asked, "Where's Harrieta?"

None of us had seen her since that morning when Aunt Gladys carried us off to school. Harrieta had been lying on the porch, smiling and watching us go.

Though it was already dark out I could see in the glow of the big mercury light Uncle Ray's face tighten up with worry and then, in an instant, harden in realization and anger. "It's those damned dog thieves. They've stolen my black and tan!"

He told us to stay out in the yard and try calling her, and then he stormed into the house. He didn't for a minute believe anything could have happened to her other than the dog thieves stealing her. Aunt Gladys followed him into the house saying softly, "Now, Ray," but he had his mind set. He began calling the neighbors on our road

trying to find out if any of them had seen Harrieta that day or if anyone had seen any suspicious-looking truck on our road.

Our neighbor across the road, old Miss Darlene, was rather eccentric and spent a good deal of time snooping into other people's business. So naturally she had been watching when a pickup with a dog coop in the back had driven down our road earlier that day. As a matter of fact, Miss Darlene had seen such a truck several times in the past weeks. She said she thought about warning us, but her daughter told her to mind her own business. And for once she had.

Uncle Ray was beside himself. He wanted to know if Miss Darlene knew who the truck belonged to. She admitted that she didn't, but in the next breath speculated that it was Don Needham, who had a camp over on Lake Keppler. It was a well-known fact, according to Miss Darlene, that Don Needham stole all types of hunting dogs and hid them out on an island in the middle of the cypress stands in the lake until he had enough to take

up to Arkansas and sell. Miss Darlene even offered to go with Uncle Ray in the morning and see if they could find the island and Harrieta.

After Uncle Ray had gotten off the phone and told us all Miss Darlene had said, he set in his old rocker for about ten minutes fuming, with his face getting redder and redder, until suddenly he sprung up and exclaimed, "By gawd, he may have left for Arkansas by morning. I'm going after my dog now!"

Aunt Gladys tried to reason with him, telling him that for one thing Miss Darlene wasn't that reliable and that Don Needham, whoever he was, may have never set eyes on Harrieta and that Uncle Ray knew better than to try to do anything when he was that mad.

But once Uncle Ray got something in his mind there was nothing for it, so he took his shotgun out of the closet (after all, no telling what someone might do if he was low enough to steal a man's dog) and set off for Keppler, without even any idea of where Mr. Needham lived. Aunt Gladys looked white-faced and worried, and I suspected her concern wasn't just for Harrieta.

Well, as Uncle Ray told it later, this is more or less what happened.

He made the fifteen-mile drive to Keppler in about twelve minutes, getting madder and more worked up mile by mile. By the time he reached the little store at Keppler, he was steaming. He went in and asked the store owner where Don Needham lived. The man said he had never heard of Don Needham, but there was a Dan Needs just down the road. This threw Uncle Ray for just a minute but then he figured that Miss Darlene probably just got the names mixed up. So he set off to find Mr. Needs.

He found the little wood frame camp house with "Dan Needs and Family" stenciled on the mailbox. It

was a nice little house with a painted deer and a birdbath in the front yard. He had hoped maybe Harrieta would still be in Mr. Needs' yard, but there was no sign or sound of any dog at all. This disappointed Uncle Ray but did not deter him. After some deliberation, he decided to leave the shotgun in the truck although he loaded it with birdshot just in case Mr. Needs turned out to be unreasonable and Uncle Ray needed some quick protection.

When Uncle Ray punched the doorbell the porch light came on and a little stocky balding man came to the door in T-shirt and house slippers. Through thick glasses, the little man peered up at Uncle Ray's six foot, four inch height and asked, "Evening, can I help you?"

Uncle Ray glared down at him and said, "I'm Ray Williams. My dog is missing."

"Un huh," the little man answered, "Well, I'm sorry to hear that, but how can I help you?"

"A fine-boned little black and tan bitch. Little over a year old." Uncle Ray waited for some sign that Mr. Needs recognized the description as being of the dog he had stolen that very day, but Mr. Needs was clever and only replied, "Well, huh, like I said, I'm sorry to hear that, and uh, if I see her I'll try to get in touch with you."

"Mr. Needs," Uncle Ray continued, "My dog was wearing a collar with my name and phone number, and anyone could plainly see she was not a stray. Now I leave other people's property alone and I expect others to do me the same."

"Well, Mr. uh..."

"Williams," Uncle Ray snapped.

"Williams. Mr. Williams. Now those are very admirable attributes, but I really don't know what all this has to do with me." Mr. Needs was easing back toward his door now.

"Look," says Uncle Ray, "I know all about that island, and those trips to

Arkansas." Uncle Ray's face was undoubtedly beginning to get bright red by now. "Like I said, Mr. Needs, I don't steal. I think it's a low-down man that'll steal another man's dog."

"Oh, I agree with you one hundred percent! I truly do!" Mr. Needs was beginning to look as if it was suddenly dawning on him what Uncle Ray's problem was, and he quickly stepped back inside the screen door. "I don't keep dogs myself, you know." His wife peered around his ample frame to see who was causing all the commotion.

At the appearance of Mrs. Needs, Uncle Ray, always a family man himself who would have felt dishonored to upset another man's wife, made a final effort. "I can't prove anything Mr. Needs. But I'll get to the bottom of this. Stealing ain't right. And when I find out who took my Harrieta, they'll have to answer to me."

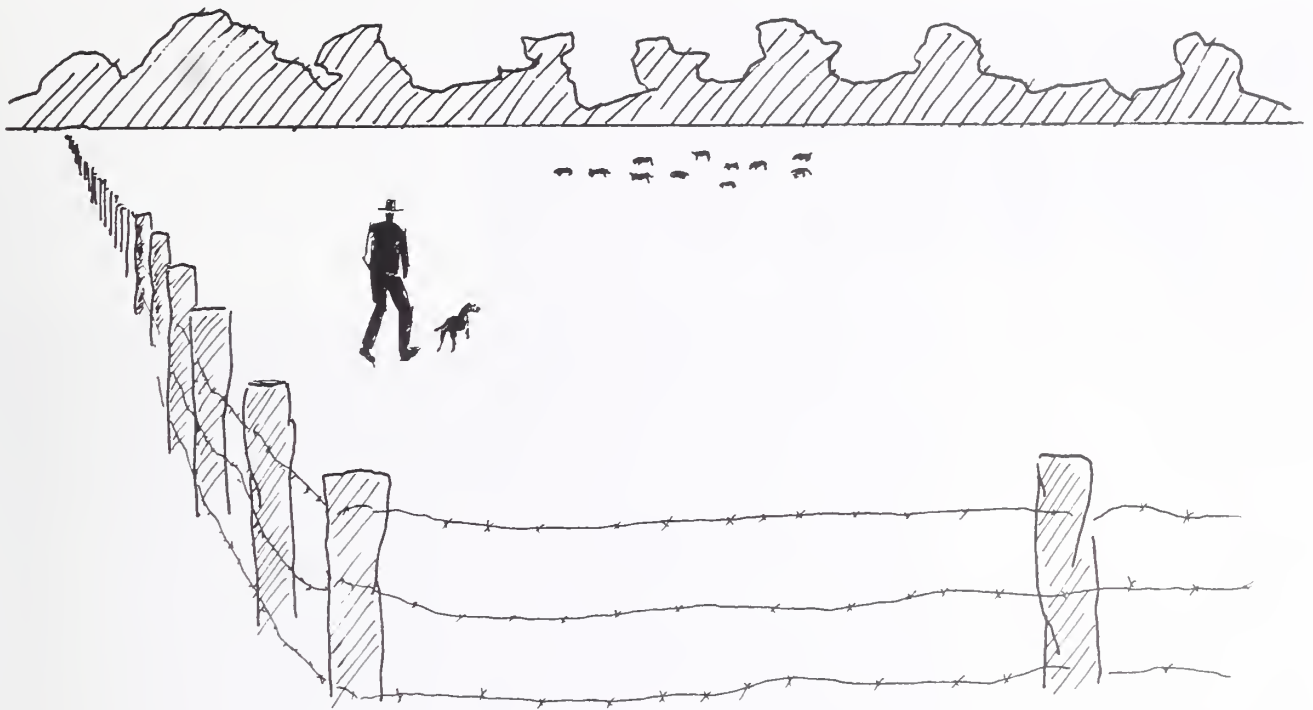
"Well, been nice talking to you, Mr. Williams," and Mr. Needs slammed the door. Through the open window Uncle Ray could hear Mrs. Needs ask, "Who was that, Dan?"

"Some lunatic, raving about a dog, an island, and stealing. A real weirdo!"

Uncle Ray smiled grimly, thinking how clever Mr. Needs was not to let his wife in on his thieving activities.

Uncle Ray came home in the dark, depressed but not defeated. He decided to take off work the next day and rent a little boat and ride around Keppler, checking out all the little islands until he found the one hiding the stolen dogs, and hopefully Harrieta. Although we all pleaded to go, he said this was something he would have to do on his own. Besides, it might be dangerous.

Aunt Gladys sent us off to bed, but I could hear the little chains creaking on the porch swing as Uncle Ray swung back and forth long into that miserable night.



In the morning, right after light, I heard the old pickup start up and back out of the drive. When it stopped directly in front of the house I jumped out of bed, wondering what Uncle Ray had forgotten. I looked out the window in the misty dawn to see him bending over in the ditch by the road, and then saw him kneel down and rest his head in his hands. He stayed like that so long that I started getting scared, but finally he stood up and walked slowly up to the house. The screen door slammed, and I heard him call to Aunt Gladys, "Gladys, honey, I'll be needing an old blanket. And I won't be going to the lake this morning."

"Oh, no, Ray," Aunt Gladys whispered.

I ran out of the bedroom crying, "What's wrong, Uncle Ray?"

He bent down and took me by the shoulders. "Little Bit, I found Harrieta. Looks like she got hit by a car yesterday, and it knocked her in the ditch. We just didn't see her in the dark last night." His eyes glistened and his voice was gruff. I immediately began crying the

tears I knew he was holding in and ran to my room to hide. I was glad the other kids were still sleeping and couldn't see me blubbing.

Uncle Ray buried Harrieta under the spreading limbs of the water oak where she used to lay in the summertime. Then he went off to work.

I expected him to be a little ashamed of accusing Mr. Needs of stealing Harrieta. But, if he was, he didn't show it. That night he called Mr. Needs and told him he'd found his dog and wouldn't be troubling Mr. Needs again. That was all.

That night after dinner, I went out to where Uncle Ray was sitting in the porch swing. By the mercury light his face looked rugged and sad. I went and stood beside him and said quietly, "Uncle Ray? Uncle Ray, I'm sorry about Harrieta." Then to my embarrassment the tears started again.

Uncle Ray pulled me into a big bear hug and his voice was husky when he said, "Me, too, Little Bit."

I leaned against him with my faced smushed into his warm spicey-smelling chest and listened

to the crickets sing in rythmn to his steady heartbeat. My tears made his shirt wet and his big, rough hands tousled my hair. After a moment he said, "But you know, Little Bit, her last months were a pleasure, both to her and to us. She didn't want for anything, and maybe it rubbed out the memory of those awful months before she came to us." More silence. And then he pushed me up, wiped my eyes with his huge thumbs and smiled. "I'm sorry she's gone, too, Little Bit. But at least the hunters didn't get her."

Alone

Moonlight gleaming through
my windows

Awake as silence
shadows around me

My mind adrift
thinking of my two-day
journey
that has brought me to
my silence

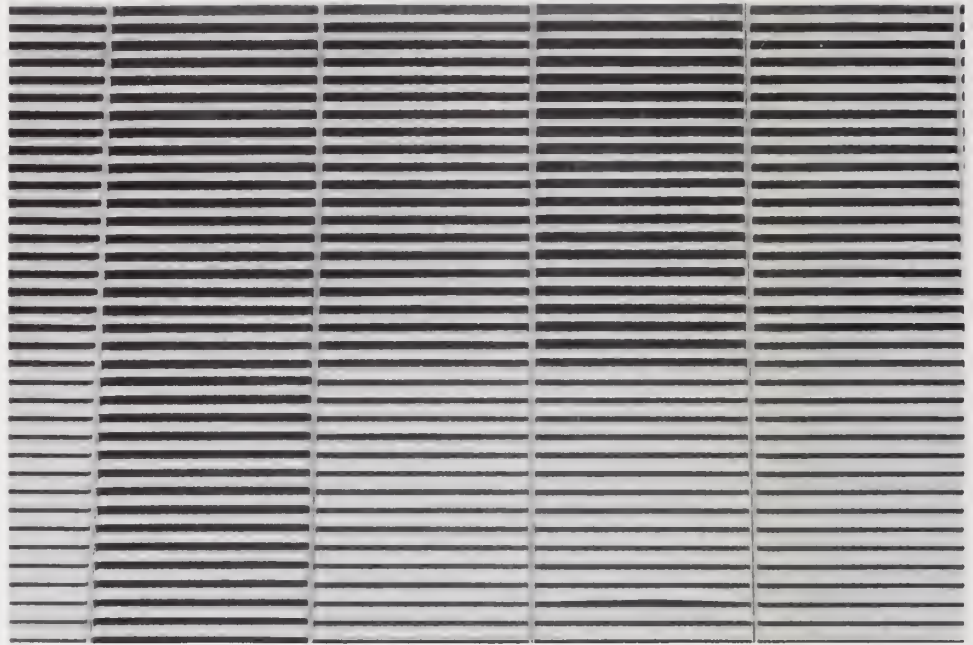
Alone in my room
without a soul to bother
casting my eyes upon
the darkness

listening to no reply
my heart reaches out
to a friend
but is only returned
with pride.

I long for tomorrow
so my soul will rest
the night.

Time's own journey
will bring the morning
light.

Thomas Naimo



Life With Whiskey Sours

Whiskey mornings shake
Me small wrapped 'round a cold cereal bowl
With milk warm bits of thoughts floating, sinking,
Stale. In morning haze I pull my sagging
Socks from my ankles to wade barefoot to
The switch -- the light -- on the wall -- blinding through
Windows hung over.

Allen Ford

Phil. 201

Orange glow,
dancing in the dark;
giving light,
but exposing nothing,
firefly ever lit
flying eccentric paths
in the night;
Slowly crushed,
extinguished,
no longer apart
from the whole
...smoking in bed, again,
in the dark
alone,
myself.

Susan Dollar



Trust

I cry
you wipe it away.
The pretense
of the strong invincible male
has been left
in the attic
with the high school trophies
and old copies of Playboy.
To let you see me now
is the greatest offer
of trust
I can make.

David J. Turner

SUMMER ODYSSEY

Linda Verrett

Tokyo! "Hey, I'm on the other side of the world!" I marveled vaguely as I stumbled into immense Narita International Airport. After thirteen hours in the air, my legs were painfully cramped and my eyes stinging with lack of sleep. Forlorn and wonderstruck, my Japanese for Travellers guide clasped half-desperately in my free hand, I set off to find my mother. And swiftly the huge seventeen-year gap that lay between her and me pushed its way into my thoughts. My throat was dry and I was shaking inside as I followed the other Americans through passport control and customs. After the customs official waved me through and I had secured my luggage, I finally headed, panting with my two unwieldy suitcases, toward one of the exits.

Once outside the door, my eyes immediately widened to take in what lay before me and to look for the tiny, dark-haired woman whom I had curiously admired over the years in the photographs she had sent to me. I stared in mute fascination at all the short people that surrounded me. I remember feeling, for a moment, a despairing loss of identity. Quite unexpectedly I felt overly conspicuous with my ankle-strapped, high-heeled shoes and my brightly colored sundress, my height, and my long hair style. Petite women and girls with short straight black hair rushed this way and that, jabbering knowingly to each other. They wore plain long skirts and flat shoes.

"Dinda?" A subdued, inquiring masculine voice sounded close to me. Startled, I looked around quickly, directly into a man's face--a short man of about fifty with sparkling crinkly eyes and a kind smile.

"Yes--" I breathed hesitantly,



relieved. "Her husband," I thought. The man continued to look at me kindly, as though I had never spoken. Wrenching my mind into formality, I smiled, nodded, and said shyly, "Hai." The man immediately took my two suitcases, and I followed him through the throngs of people for a short distance when he stopped and called out, "Miyko." There she was, thirty feet away, dressed just like the other women at the airport, looking like the pictures--but a little shorter, I noticed distractedly as she turned and looked at me. The recognition that came over her face made me wonder for a minute how to react. I stood there in suddenly uncomfortable shoes and then tried my best at a radiant, TV-happy-reunion smile--but I'm sure it turned out small and frightened. After that moment, however, Tokyo and the hundreds of other strange people were gone from my thoughts as my mother called my name and ran towards me. Next I was being held very tightly by her. Right then, I felt that I was being both drained of and overcome by my own emotions.

Only when I realized how I was towering over my mother and that people were staring did I begin to feel self-conscious again. Finally she let go of me, dried her tears, and asked the age-old question that they ask on TV: "Are you hungry?"

After a week at my mother's tiny doll-like house in Omiya City, I realized with some chagrin that since I was the foreigner, I would be doing the adjusting to the way of life which surrounded me. I set out to do so as graciously as I could. I started remembering to remove my shoes before entering any house. And although it numbed me, I learned to sit on the straw-matted floor with my legs under me. I felt very large and gauche sitting in this manner, especially because it was so natural and easy for the Japanese women and girls. Try as I might, my legs simply wouldn't become any shorter or smaller and fold as neatly under me as theirs did.

Learning to use chopsticks became an almost tearful affair for me. I wanted to spear those unidentifiable objects square in the middle and then worry about the eating part. But that would never do, so I spent much of my mealtimes enviously spying on the deft fingers of the nearest person at the table. Men, women, and children all have specific roles in the Japanese family. I quickly acknowledged that most of the time women are seen and not heard and that I was considered a child.

In fact, all the cousins that came over to visit me were still considered children, although none of them were under twenty-five, because they hadn't married yet. The girl cousins would visit every day--

Keiko, Yokiko, Kiyomi, and Masako. They would sit delicately around me on the floor, fanning me, twittering softly, and fingering the curls in my hair. When I visited them, they would smile at me continuously; and it was a little astounding that the smiles were always the genuine happy-you're-here kind. The uncles and aunts would sit and talk among themselves. Sitting perfectly still and not understanding a word that was spoken in the rapid conversation, I found it remarkably easy for the constant sound of their voices to lull me to sleep. But from everyone's looks and gestures, I knew that most of the talk was about me, and I didn't want to be rude by appearing confused or bored.

In Japan, it's customary to offer food and drink as a sign of hospitality and welcome. Having grown accustomed to asking politely, "Kore wa nan desu ka?" (What is this?), I learned some of what I liked—and didn't like to eat. On hot days, cousins would serve me iced coffee at their house. Takua, the Japanese pickle made from long yellow turnips, was also frequently offered. I liked the taste of it so much that I often mixed it with my bowl of rice, much to the amusement of my mother and her family. At mealtimes, it was great fun sitting at a huge table with family and friends all laughing through our attempts at verbal communication. I was content to just sit and look at all the colorful food that adorned the platters, but one after the other, each person at the table seized their chopsticks and pushed food at me, urging me to taste everything. Even though I did eat the boiled squid, which tasted like liver, I merely gaped at the little octopus which sat in front of me invitingly. The Japanese love to drink Kirin beer and rare old Suntory whiskey. If anyone's glass is less than brimming, the person sitting next to him picks up the bottle of liquor and says, "Dozo"

(Please). One replies "Hai, domo" (Yes, thank you), picks up his glass and allows it to be filled again. Striving to do what everyone else was doing, I found myself saying "Hai, domo" a lot. I also found myself with a light head in the evenings and a heavy one in the mornings.

In the Japanese restaurants, much of the food is exotic and delicious, and the service is usually fascinating. Coming in the door, one is greeted with a smile, a bow, and "Hai, simasen." Later, when I learned that "simasen" is an apology for having taken some of one's time, I felt flattered. The waiters are so prompt, friendly, and unobtrusive that I found myself fixing an enchanted gaze upon them as they hurried around the tables taking orders and giving swift replies of "Hai wakarimashita." Upon leaving the restaurant, I would hear multiple cries of "Arigato gozaimashita" (Thank you very much). As most of the businesses in Omiya City are very intimate and comfortably social, I found service to be the same everywhere I went: department stores, grocery stores, beauty shops, and souvenir shops. The first time I walked into a 7-Eleven store in Japan, I was enthralled. I walked down aisles of bagged, dried baby octopuses, smoked squid, Japanese cookies and candy, and cellophane-packed rice balls wrapped in dried seaweed. These rice balls, called oni di di, can be heated, if one likes, in the store's microwave oven.

A notably interesting custom of the Japanese is singing. I met few people who do not have good singing voices. And many of the restaurants and nightclubs own an excellent sound system and a large selection of cassette tapes. A customer gets up, puts a tape in, finds the appropriate word book, picks up the microphone, and sings. Everyone always listens interestedly and claps justly

afterwards. In a certain restaurant near my mother's home, the cooks, waiters, and even the restaurant owner all stop work to listen, smile, and sometimes join in on the singing and dancing. On a particularly merry night there, customers realized I am an American, and soon I was urged to sing for them. The only American song on the cassettes was "My Way," and the words were written in the songbook in KataKana, the Japanese form of writing. I couldn't sing it for them, and they were very disappointed. That night a gracious lady dance instructor, no doubt having observed my very American dancing to "Love You, Tokyo," came up to me and began to show me the Japanese Bon-Odori dance. It is very beautiful, and that night I learned it.

When the word "disco" passed my lips, I was immediately whisked off to one by my mother, her husband, and a whole clan of cousins. I was curious, not knowing what to expect. When I walked in the door of the Surfer Disco, I was very pleasantly surprised. Young people were dancing enthusiastically to the current American hits I had been missing. Many of the people tried occasionally to sing the words. I think I sang every record all the way through just to make sure I could still speak English. Some American records are widely known in Japan; for instance, a famed Eagles hit was played, and I almost giggled when my cousin Yokiko tapped me on the shoulder and said "You know? Hoteddy Caddyfodni-a?" I felt almost as if I were back in America, for the Japanese disco is basically the same as the American disco. However, at the Japanese disco, one doesn't wait to be asked to dance; he just gets up and dances either by himself or with everyone else on the floor. Popular foods served in the discos are fresh fruits and vegetables, popcorn, spaghetti, and mineral water.

Days filled with shopping,

traveling, eating out, and meeting new people had me more than ready for bed every night. I did sleep well each night in Japan, but my mother said the Japanese baths were the reason. In the luxury hotels in Japan, all the women take a bath together in a large room; the tub is a huge, steaming, sunken pool, very elegant and deep enough to swim in. One needn't worry about getting the floor wet, because water continually flows out through the drains in the floor. Some of the vacation spots have public baths in which men, women, and children all take a bath together in an outside stone bath among nature. At first, I took baths rather grudgingly; I thought the Japanese bath was a little preposterous.

Often, two people take a bath together; when my cousin Yakawa first showed me how to take a bath, I remember getting into the deep tub and almost shrieking at the temperature of the water. "Atsui," YuKawa conceded nonchalantly, dipping some of the water and pouring it over her. I sat there and tried not to gasp as YuKawa scrubbed herself with water only. When she finished her scrubbing, I got out of the tub and followed suit while she sat in the hot water. Then, she got out of the tub and scrubbed again, this time with soap and water. She did this while I got back into the tub. YuKawa dipped more water, rinsed the soap off, then soaked again in the tub while I washed with soap. I sat in the steaming water one more time, and the chore was finished. After a few more of those baths, I did get used to them; the water felt very soothing and relaxing after a while, and my mother's thirteen-dollar-a-bar soap and special abrasive washcloths were excellent for my skin.

I wasn't used to wearing designer pajamas from France everyday or sitting in the back of plush Toyotas and holding lace handkerchiefs.

Soon I began to long to wear my clothes from home and do something small and simple with someone my own age. One day my mother allowed me to put on a pair of shorts, braid my hair, and bike ride, on invitation, to the playground with two girls from down the street. When we reached the playground, we engaged in a silent game of volleyball. Our conversation consisted of one-word sentences, sometimes in Japanese and sometimes in English, gestures, and awkward giggles. The girls then showed me their high school; one of them got off her bike, stood next to me and pointing, said "Basketball court, tennis court, and baseball field." I smiled and nodded, and the girl practically beamed. After they rode with me back to my mother's house, they said in unison, "Hope to see you again," and rode off. I was touched to think that those girls probably learned the English words they had used especially for that day with me.

The Japanese enjoy camping as much as Americans do, and it was on that camping trip in the mountains that the whole, honest beauty of my summer of '81 presented itself to me. Although I had traveled to most of the attractive cities in Japan and to the popular tourist spots, those two days in the mountains were my most unforgettable. The camping trip was to be my last outing before I returned stateside; it was a present from my mother's sister, Kimie. We set up camp above a great stream that flowed from an ice cave about three hundred yards away. My bewilderment at coming to a foreign country was put to flight by the fun-filled days spent boat riding, gathering wood, washing dishes in the stream, and helping to cook. And the strain of dressing up and making appearances every day to family and important friends had gone; my mother and I could finally relax.

I made only one "appearance"

during the camping trip. It was the night when all nine of us and the dog, Yukichan, were sitting cross-legged, crowded into one tiny tent. That night the clouds had drifted down the mountains and settled right above the camp, and a very soft rain whispered against the tent. Everyone was taking turns at the microphone on Uncle June's cassette player, singing romantic Oriental songs. Each of the grown-ups sang a song to me as a gift of remembrance. As they sang, I mentally sorted out the words and their meanings, till to my delight I partially understood the songs. After my mother and Aunt Kimie sang together for me, everyone wanted me to sing. I floundered, telling them I didn't know any Japanese songs. Cousin Yujie, however, knew one American song--"Row, Row, Row Your Boat." The tent was hushed when Yujie said gently, "Linda, duet?" So Yujie and I sang "Row, Row, Row Your Boat" as the others looked on, silent. I knew that no one else in the tent knew what the words meant, but they lost meaning even to me as I saw the quiet emotion in eight pairs of eyes. My mother took that moment to bow to each person in the tent and to thank them repeatedly for sharing her happiness in seeing the youngest of her four children (all in America) after seventeen years.

Looking back, I see that my whole summer has faded behind me, but that misty night in the tent has embedded itself in my mind's eye--and in my heart. My memory of Japan isn't of the American tourists I saw at the fancy hotels or of the souvenir shops or even of the tacitly understood foreign space between my mother and me. Rather, it is of the charming, happy children, the genuine sincerity and camaraderie among young people and elderly alike, and of the universal meaning of real happiness that I did understand in my mother's face.



No rain tomorrow.
On its back holding water . . .
A thin crescent moon.

Etoile M. Nichols

Tin birds hang on strings
Soft afternoon breezes blow.
Delicate tones sound.

Gail Dwyer

FOR COLORED GIRLS WHO CONSIDERED SUICIDE WHEN THE RAINBOW IS ENUP





Priority and Pleasure

PRIORITY:

Tempt me not with sparkling smile
I shall not surrender to your guile.
The days grow short, I have much to do
I shall not spend my time with you.

PLEASURE:

The time is now! Come, follow me
I can be yours eternally.
I have much to offer, you cannot lose
Weep not tomorrow with regret, do not refuse.

PRIORITY:

Depart! No tears of regret shall I weep,
Nor a whirlwind shall I reap
I gaze toward the fruit on the vine
I reach. The orchard will be mine!

Marjorie Folliott

To Love the Extremes

Two different men of seemingly extremes
Have captured this heart of mine.
Through one I drink the passion of champagne;
The other, the tart of wine.

The first I've known throughout my life;
I've seen through most my time.
The second has just encountered my path;
The path of a cluttered mind.

Through one I find the peace of serenity;
A life of sober glee.
Through the other there is a need for change;
A change that beckons me.

For one there is no need for narcotics;
An hallucinogen he will never see.
The other has encountered the entirety of them
From Mary Jane to PCP.

One is interested in the activity of sports;
He wins them all to date.
The other can't even understand the technique
Of establishing a teamworking coordinate.

For one there is an intelligence,
Enough to get him by.
The other is able to essay the question
Of every if, but, and why.

Now one although so quiet he seems
Has mastered the game of sneak.
The other would not possess such "virtue"
If playing were within his reach.

In one I seek the comfort
Of a stable relationship.
In the other I yearn for experiences
For within my memoirs to slip.

Birdia Palmer



Weight Watcher's Delight

Tastier than chicken,
fewer calories than beef--

 Your body
is a greater banquet
than any chef
or time
or God
could create.

 So set the table
in the middle of the bed
and let me feast
till morning and beyond.

David L. Ulmer

The Wholing of Halves

Unvanquished desires
creeping on paths
of secretly-sorted emotions;

empty gestures
paralyzed amidst intermissions
of forgotten duets;

confused spirits
lingering through realms
of isolated individuality;

emerge.

Suddenly,

unexpected signals, freely given,

converge.

Intertwining souls assemble;
love-dipped wings sift
dancing spirits into oneness.

Kenneth Woodard

THE PROMISE

Virginia Godfrey

I, Colonel Jehu Solomon Witherspoon, being of sound mind
and knowing the uncertainty of life, do make this
my last will and testament

Our yardman died today. His name was Dick Johnson and he was only forty-five years old. He was named Johnson as that was his mother's maiden name. Illegitimate children, born of black mothers and white fathers, take the mother's names.

His father, Colonel Jehu Solomon Witherspoon, had sired twenty-one of these half-white children, and had recognized them only to the extent that he worked them in his vast cotton fields and left them alone. To their mothers he had acknowledged them with a promise that when he died he would leave each of his cotton-row children a plot of ground and perhaps a mule.

Mary Johnson believed in that promise and taught her half-white children saying, "The Colonel is a honorable man. He alway say his word is good as his bond. You believe in him and work hard and stay away from the big house."

The last words she spoke before she died were, "Don't forgit the Colonel's promise."

Many of the children of various mothers laughed about the promise and left the cotton fields to go to nearby cities and towns for better jobs, but not Dick. He stayed and worked the cotton fields, doing outside work to supplement his inadequate income.

Humble -- humble -- he lived in fear someone would punish him for being half-white, and he would deny it bitterly. He drove twenty miles once a week to be our yardman, and we paid him by the hour and his car expense. His only clothes were the hand-me-downs from our son and his old army clothes.



He had been drafted in the army during World War II and served all over the world, both in the Pacific and in Europe, but he could not tell exactly where he had been. We questioned him, and he replied, "I never had a gun in my hands. I dug latrines and put out rations for the fighting men. I never killed nobody, and I thank God for that."

He had received no decorations to wear over his heart, but he needed none as he wore the promise of his white father in his heart.

When the Old Missus died, leaving the Colonel all alone, Dick grieved for him. He delivered fresh turnip greens, freshly killed and cleaned squirrels, and early-morning-caught catfish to the Colonel's back door. He worked in the little cemetery where the Old Missus was buried and placed wild flowers on her grave.

When the Colonel married pretty Miss Elizabeth DeBrule, Dick joined in the celebration with the other black people down on Red River at the big barbeque. He was glad the

Colonel had a young wife to share his big house. The big celebration was when the Colonel's wife had a baby. A young Jehu Solomon Witherspoon who in a few years would be big enough to have a pony and ride over the land with the Colonel. How proud Dick was of that little boy! He told us about him in glowing and loving terms, "He's a fine boy and gonna be jest like his pappy."

Our yardman died today -- forty-five years old -- and will be buried in a few days after all the kinfolks come and the sympathy cards arrive in the mail to be read with great ceremony at the funeral. The only florist shop flowers will be from us, as he was our yardman and we loved him. He will be buried in our son's suit. There will be no American flag to cover the casket, as no one in his family knows how to call the proper people and go through the red tape to secure one.

Our yardman died today, June 1 1965, but he will live in every flower and tomato plant he placed in the soil. He had a green thumb and we prized that talent in him and respected him as an individual.

Surely God will give him a plot of ground for a garden -- he will feel at home there, and Heaven will be more beautiful -- and a promise will be fulfilled.

All my worldly goods, both real and personal, including my plantation, stocks, bonds, farm machinery and farm animals, etc., I leave and bequeath to my wife, Elizabeth DeBrule Witherspoon, and to any children born of the marriage of Elizabeth and myself, to share and share alike Done this 5th day of January, 1948



The Harvest

Scattered among everyday
street hustle, lonely despair
of days on the road,
the discovery -
hidden glorious treasure,
Americana.

Burning into our
crystal October morning,
a northbound train,
leaving the purple harvest,
the stained, cut hands,
the flesh stuck in old
hard-as-wood boots,
leaving California wine country
with thirty dollars, new blue tennis shoes,
sack full of mustard.

The train climbed into the mountains.
No road, path, settlement,
just evergreen.
We met a rushing stream, hung nearly
even with wild, white-water,
hugged the mountain curve,
entranced, too close to the
open boxcar door,
chill wind wrapping
around us, flying into cascading waterfalls,
before the speeding train
jerked us away
and threw us out onto
the sparkling water again.

We were explorers-
the first to see soft green ferns,
to smell fragrant woods,
to watch sunlight spin through
flickering branches and fall
into new waters.

At noon the train stopped.
Acres cleared of forest and
replaced with orderly rows
of pear trees, thick with ripe fruit
and waiting to fall into
the apron of our flannel shirts.

We swung our legs in the sunshine
of the doorway, eating wet pears;
this orchard held us,
in the quiet between two mountain ridges,
in the quiet of our content.

Susan Haga

Baby Vicious

Winter's breath skirts night's ground
Round brown bushes to cling
Scrape scratch at the stoic
Walls like shadows remain
Unmoved by the crying
Whisper left suspended
Caught like the dark trapped like
The dead sigh of living
This winter wind travels
Like a twisted Jesus
Freak born again breathing
Down breathing hard breathing
Vicious baby vicious
Breathing whispers through night
Shivers through window panes
Winter through wailing walls

Aller Ford

SAFE

Kathleen Smith

CHARACTERS:

LUCY BECKER:

She is in her early sixties, mother of four children, active in many service organizations.

HOWARD BECKER:

He is a lieutenant general in his mid-sixties, retiring as the commanding officer of West Point.

SETTING:

The play takes place in the bed-sitting room of the Becker home. It is the late afternoon following the lieutenant general's retirement ceremonies at West Point. It is about six p.m. The Beckers are preparing for the banquet to be held in his honor that evening.

LUCY: I'm glad that's over! My shoes are killing me! I can't ever remember standing for so long.

HOWARD: Quite a crowd, wasn't there?

LUCY: Only half the civilized world--the army half, anyway. Did you see old General Stanton? He kept falling asleep. It was hysterical! Or how about that dress Sharon Johnson had on! Good grief! I can't believe Alex let her out of the house looking like that!

HOWARD: I started counting bald heads--men and women--halfway through the ceremony. I don't know why we have to have the same speech every time someone retires.

LUCY: Maybe they could just record a standard retirement speech and place a tape recorder on the speaker's stand. At least it would save some poor soul from trying to sound sincere and intelligent at the same time.

HOWARD: Now it wasn't that bad, Lucy!

LUCY: (Laughs) I guess not, but I think I'll put it in the suggestion box.

HOWARD: What did you think of my speech?

LUCY: Not bad--at least until you started talking about "the big picture" and calling the army the biggest game you ever played in. God, Howard, who wrote that crap for you?

HOWARD: I did.

LUCY: Sorry, dear. I didn't mean to be so callous--it's been a long afternoon. I guess that the ceremony didn't have quite as much meaning for me. I've been to so many of them. Same places, same uniforms, same faces...

HOWARD: It was good to see them, so many faces from the past. It really made me realize...just how old I am.

LUCY: We're all getting there, dear. Would you like a drink? I can't get the taste of that punch out of my mouth.

HOWARD: Sure; don't you want me to make them?

LUCY: No, you go ahead and change clothes. It'll take you longer to transfer your ribbons and medals from one uniform to the other.

HOWARD: I guess you're right. Make mine wine...no, scotch; no ice.

LUCY: All right, can I get you anything else?

HOWARD: No, that's fine.

(Lucy exits. Howard walks over to the dresser and begins to slowly and methodically remove his decorations and medals. He carefully inspects each piece before placing it on the dresser. Howard is lost in thought when Lucy re-enters the room. She brings drinks for them both.)

LUCY: There we are. How's that?

HOWARD: Umm, good, thanks.

(Lucy begins to undress

wandering around the room, refreshing makeup, changing into formal clothes for the evening.)

LUCY: You look as though you were a million miles away...lots of memories?

HOWARD: Yes, lots of memories. In fact, my whole life seems to be summed up by these pieces of metal and ribbons. Look at this one--remember? Second lieutenant. A "Looney." I thought I'd never get those little gold bars!

LUCY: That was before we met, remember? I'm afraid I only saw you after those four years at the Point--and you were well on your way to first lieutenant.

HOWARD: Oh, yes--first lieutenant and that first tug of progress on the way up.

LUCY: I was so proud of you! And then, being the first of your class to make captain and then major...all the way to brigadier general.

HOWARD: I really moved fast in those days!

LUCY: In more ways than one...

HOWARD: What does that mean?

LUCY: Nothing, just a little joke, dear. Come on, now, let's get it moving. There's going to be plenty of time for remembering later.

HOWARD: I will. . . Just give me a minute. God, I was so young then! In so many ways, I wish it was just beginning.....I'd start over in a minute, just to feel those little successes once more.

LUCY: You don't really mean that! You've had a wonderful career, dear.

HOWARD: "Had" is right! God, that sounds so final. I'm just not used to thinking in the past tense, especially about myself!

LUCY: Don't be so maudlin, you've still got the banquet to get through

tonight.

HOWARD: Yes, and then it's all over.

LUCY: You can say that again!

HOWARD: You sound so happy that I'm through.

LUCY: Not happy, relieved.

HOWARD: Relieved! what do you mean? Relieved?

LUCY: Well, I can't say that I'll miss a lot of the hassle that goes with being Mrs. Lieutenant General. Not that I haven't enjoyed it. Well...most of it. No, I'm more than ready to take on civilian life.

HOWARD: I didn't realize that it was such a bother to you! You certainly haven't complained about the privileges of my rank or job.

LUCY: And who in their right mind would?

HOWARD: You're certainly treating all of this rather callously!

LUCY: I don't mean to. It's just that I feel a new beginning for us, and I'm anxious to get on with it.

HOWARD: New beginning! What on earth are you talking about! The great new world of Senior Citizen's clubs...Maybe I could be a volunteer crossing guard at an elementary school. They'd love my uniform!

LUCY: Well, somebody has to do it. What's wrong with volunteer work? I've done it all my life.

HOWARD: Yes, but you're - -

LUCY: I'm what?

HOWARD: You know what I mean.

LUCY: I'm afraid I do.

HOWARD: Look, I don't want to fight, Lucy, not now.

LUCY: You never do. You never have. All our marriage you've run at the least little sign of a disagreement.

HOWARD: I just don't like to argue, that's all. It doesn't serve any purpose, and it just upsets the children.

LUCY: The children....The children are all four of them grown and

gone..or haven't you noticed? But, then why should I expect you to? You were never around when they were here. I suppose the house does seem the same to you, kids or not.

HOWARD: That's not fair! Do you think I enjoyed being gone so much? I couldn't help it if my career demanded time away from you and the kids.

LUCY: You never turned down an assignment either, never once thought of us first!

HOWARD: Of course, I was thinking of you. I worked hard for you and the kids. It takes a lot to put four kids through school today. Where would they be if I hadn't played the game and moved up the ladder?

LUCY: The kids would be just fine. It wouldn't have hurt any of them to help themselves. Well, let's not get off on that subject, or we'll never get to the banquet.

HOWARD: All the same--I was thinking of you...Besides, you knew exactly what you were getting into when you married me.

LUCY: I knew what you told me...and what my mother went through with my dad...I knew the army way of life. I just didn't know the Howard Becker Army.

HOWARD: Meaning?

LUCY: I knew that your career meant our career...But I wasn't prepared to have the army dictate my every move.

HOWARD: That's not the way things were.

LUCY: Sure it was! I know all about the clubs, charity work, and the social obligations. I just never realized how they totally dominated my own life.

HOWARD: Come on. Lucy--You have had a ball!

LUCY: Sure, the first ten or fifteen years were a lark. But when I decided to return to college and finish my journalism degree--that's when I saw exactly how far I could

go.

HOWARD: I was behind you all the way.

LUCY: So were all the other wives...until they realized that I was actually considering a career. That's when I found out that your career was truly our career. God, I can still hear the silence at the bridge club when I announced I was job hunting...and then the polite laughter. No one took me seriously...or didn't want to.

HOWARD: You didn't really need to work.

LUCY: I wanted to!

HOWARD: But you got over it. . .

LUCY: No, it was just that my résumé said "forty-year-old woman, no experience, period."

HOWARD: My work was enough for us--and I was thinking of you....

LUCY: Want another drink, dear?

HOWARD: Sure, if it's not too much trouble!

LUCY: My, we're touchy, aren't we?

HOWARD: Listen, this means a lot to me, so let's not get upset. I just want everything to go smoothly, like always. Can't you keep up the act for a few more hours?

LUCY: That's exactly what it will be, an act. I'm surprised you finally noticed.

HOWARD: I've noticed all right, noticed for 25 years.

LUCY: Good God, here it comes...the Martyr Lecture again. I don't think I can bear to have a recital of all your wonderful sacrifices and accomplishments. What a bunch of crap! You did it all for Howard, and that's all there is to it!

HOWARD: You self-serving bitch! I suppose you think it was all fun...

LUCY: You loved every minute of it, and now you're like a child on summer vacation with nothing to do.

HOWARD: Don't start on that! Not

now! I'll find something to do. After all, there must be something for...

LUCY: ...For retired generals...Sure there are hundreds of positions just waiting to be filled.

HOWARD: Stop! Just stop, damn it! You'll go too far this time.

LUCY: Oh, of course, decorum at all times! What could I have been thinking!

HOWARD: Get me that drink, will you.

LUCY: Sure, and you get your medals on straight! I want everyone to see what a good boy you've been. You'll blind them with that flash of gold! I've never understood why they have you wear those tiny little medals on formal dress uniforms--they look like toys!

HOWARD: You know very well that the full size ones take up too much room--and they're called miniature medals, not "little tiny" ones!

LUCY: I'd think that you'd want to wear all the big ones--for the near-sighted at the back tables.

HOWARD: Look out, now!

LUCY: Maybe you should have each one engraved and dedicated to each of your conquests. You know..."This one's to Lucy, this one's to Janie, this one to Sylvia..."

HOWARD: Are you going to get the drinks? Or shall I call the houseboy?

LUCY: I'll get them...And darling, don't forget my favorite--your marksmanship medal.

(Lucy exits. Howard continues dressing, slowly attaching all the trappings of a general on his evening dress uniform. He admires himself in the mirror, etc. Lucy enters with drinks.)

LUCY: Here we go...a double for the celebration.

HOWARD: Are you sure that's wise?

LUCY: Don't worry; I'll be the perfect little lady. Have you ever had to worry about my public behavior? If



there's one thing the army's taught me...it's how to hold your liquor...smile...and be polite to complete idiots.

HOWARD: All the same, go easy on the booze tonight. How do I look?

LUCY: Handsome as always. I know the ladies will be appreciative...at least they'll have something to look at while being bored to death by the speeches and toasts.

HOWARD: I do look pretty good! Not bad for 62 years--At least I've never gone flabby--that jogging has really paid off...Yes sir, not bad at all. What do you think, Lucy?

LUCY: You look divine, dear...I'm sure the women in the room will be undressing you in their minds...the ones that haven't already had the privilege, personally. However, I doubt if there'll be many in that category, tonight! You have been

a popular man.

HOWARD: You didn't seem to mind.

LUCY: How would you know? I don't recall you ever asking permission...or for that matter my giving it. But, then, I guess they are past history. They are, aren't they? No...don't tell me, I don't want to know...I never wanted to know.

HOWARD: Like I said, you didn't seem to mind.

LUCY: Mind? Yes, I minded, and why I find you so attractive after all these years is still a mystery to me. If I knew the answer to that question, I'd probably have left long ago. I guess that the "plain-looking" little journalism major deep inside me still refuses to believe that a terribly handsome second lieutenant would want to marry her.

HOWARD: Oh, come now, I'd hardly call you plain.

LUCY: Maybe not plain..but, safe, very safe. That's what I was and still am to you, a very safe person, just the woman to marry, have your children, and see that all the right things were done at the proper time...and most importantly, not be in your way!

HOWARD: And, I must say, you did it all beautifully, just as I knew you would. In fact, you did it too well. In the past few minutes I've just realized how nicely you've managed without me...and all the time I thought you were so dependent on me.

LUCY: How can you depend on someone who's not around?

HOWARD: You don't seem too upset about it all.

LUCY: (Raising her drink in a mock salute) I've had help from my friend, and I gave up worrying long ago. I think it was after I found out about Sylvia...or was it Janie? I can't remember; they all seem to blur together...

HOWARD: I thought we'd decided that was in the past.

LUCY: Sure, fine.

HOWARD: Well, at least J&B hasn't disappointed you! You most assuredly have a friend in him...a true friend, right?

LUCY: (Saluting with the drink again) Right!

HOWARD: Forget the others, Lucy. I don't imagine there's much call for a used general these days. Besides, you know they never were serious involvements...just a little company when I was lonely.

LUCY: And you didn't think that I was lonely, too?

HOWARD: You didn't stay that way for long as I recall.

LUCY: I didn't see the need to; after all what's fair...

HOWARD: Who's talking fair? You're my wife and you're not supposed to...

LUCY: Not supposed to what? Sneak around and have tawdry affairs on the sly?...My dear, I was the last of the group to succumb..and the first to wish that I hadn't been the last. But, it certainly keeps the night terrors at bay.

HOWARD: Night terrors?

LUCY: You know...when there's no one to snuggle your back against in bed...no one to hold your hand until you fall asleep...free and safe from the unknown fear that leaves you shaking, and only the touch of another person will enable you to control the shivers and finally rest.

HOWARD: You have had your "night terrors," some of them rather handsome, as I recall.

LUCY: Go to hell, you unfeeling bastard.

HOWARD: Yes, yes, well, let's not rehash all of this. We're both too old and too settled to worry about liaisons of the past.

LUCY: You're right; let the past be, if you can. It's the present I'm concerned with. What are you going to do now?

HOWARD: I don't know. I really don't know. I just can't decide right now.

LUCY: You mean you've refused to think about it! You have offers from so many places, what is there to decide? Either you take one or you don't. There's no rule that you must go on working. You could simply retire.

HOWARD: Retire? I'm not ready for that. But I'm not going to take some menial figurehead job...just to keep busy. I couldn't stand that. I'd rather continue to work in the garden than be the "token general"...My garden has been successful, hasn't it?

LUCY: Yes, dear. You have kept the house in fresh flowers, but I'm not sure that it would be enough for you, if gardening is all you have.

HOWARD: I do suppose the winter would be a problem... unless I built a greenhouse. Yes, that's what I could do!

LUCY: Wait a minute! One minute you're ready to stake your claim to a board of director's job and the next, you've built a greenhouse and shut yourself up for the winter!

HOWARD: I'm just undecided. I want to do what's best for both of us.

LUCY: What's best for both of us is for you to make a decision. You know that I'll be content with whatever you want to do...Even a move to a new city might do us both some good.

HOWARD: I don't know. I'm not suited for any other kind of work. I'm too old to think about another career. All I really have to decide is which board of director's offer I'll accept. It always looks good to have a military man on your board of directors.

LUCY: You'll find something.

HOWARD: I'm not so sure. I feel so insecure about it all.

Lucy: The right thing will turn up, you'll see.

HOWARD: I'm afraid not...afraid... God, did you hear that? I've finally said it. I am afraid of the future...admitted it out loud...in front of a witness!

LUCY: You, afraid? don't kid me! You've never been afraid in your life...you were born absolutely sure of yourself...I'm convinced of that...or have you tricked me, again?

HOWARD: Cut the crap, Lucy! I said I was afraid...can't you allow me that?

LUCY: I don't know what you're talking about.

HOWARD: I want the luxury of being afraid, just once. You think that all the emotional demands in our life have been placed on you...Well, I'm not going to let you get away

with it anymore.

LUCY: Howard?

HOWARD: It's scary, this whole retirement business. I've never felt this way before and you refuse to acknowledge my uncertainty.

LUCY: You mean you just don't want to face life without a uniform to protect you.

HOWARD: ...Or to protect you.

LUCY: It's time to stop, we'll be late for the dinner...

HOWARD: ...Now, who's running from trouble?

LUCY: I'm not running from anything; I don't want to be late.

HOWARD: Damn it, Lucy! I need some time.

LUCY: We don't have time, not now. We'll talk about this later. You can indulge yourself, after the banquet.

HOWARD: This can't wait! I can't go without knowing what comes afterwards. Everyone will want to know what I'm going to do...all of those questions...

LUCY: ...And, you've always been the man with the answers.

HOWARD: That's right, and I'm so tired of always having to make the right decision. Just once, I wish someone would do it for me. I'm scared to death. I've never felt this way in my life. I don't know what to do.

LUCY: You're shaking all over. Here, sit down; take a drink. This will calm you. Now, just relax. Everything will be just fine.

HOWARD: I'm sorry, Lucy, so sorry. I don't know what's come over me...I've never acted like this in my life...

LUCY: Howard, are you crying?

HOWARD: No!...

LUCY: I never meant to hurt you...I didn't realize how deeply all of this was affecting you, or that you felt this way...I've never seen a man cry before. Men aren't supposed to cry.

I didn't know they could...I wish I didn't know they could---damn you, Howard! You're mixing things all up. I wish that I'd never seen this!

HOWARD: I'm sorry. What else can I say? I feel like such a fool!

LUCY: I'm sorry, too. Look, you've been through a lot today. You've built up a lot of anxiety and tension. It's going to be all right. Here, let me rub your back...now, doesn't that feel better?

HOWARD: Yes, much, but, I don't think I can go through with tonight...all those faces...and the minds behind them full of pity for the old, retired man...just put him away somewhere and get on with the rest of the business...They still have an Old Soldier's Home in Washington; did you know that?

LUCY: Why all the pity? This certainly doesn't sound like the Howard Becker I know talking. Come on, (tenderly) let me help you with your cuff links.

HOWARD: O.K. I guess I'd better pull myself together and get ready for the onslaught.

LUCY: That's a good boy. Come now, let's see...tie straight, good, good. You look wonderful.

HOWARD: You're not just saying that?

LUCY: Of course, not! Besides, that's my line. I'm the plain one, remember?

HOWARD: I don't know what I'd do without you, Lucy. Honestly, I don't.

LUCY: You'd manage.

HOWARD: No, not me, but, I know that you would. God, I hope that I die first. I couldn't face it without you.

LUCY: Bullshit! I suppose you were thinking that you couldn't live without me each time you made a conquest. Well, I can tell you that I certainly was. I've wished you dead...or at least removed from my life so many times. Don't look so hurt! I got over it. Time numbs most of those feelings, and, now, well...

HOWARD: ...And, now I'm so old that it wouldn't matter?

LUCY: And, now I don't really care who you fantasize about when you come to my bed...Isn't that odd?...how it's always the woman's bed, I mean her possession?...if not her room, at least her bed...or her half of the bed. That's the only territory I've had to call my own in our entire marriage...one half of a bed, and that was only when I learned that I could say "No."

HOWARD: You certainly learned to use that word liberally!

LUCY: It was all I had, and, now....

HOWARD: Now, it doesn't matter.

LUCY: You're the one who said it.

HOWARD: Well, what's done is done.

LUCY: Right, I drink too much and you sleep around...too much. It's over now, so let's not dwell on it. I just pick out the good times to remember...and we'll have lots more of them. You'll see. We're not dead...yet. So, let's get moving.

HOWARD: You're right, as usual, Lucy. I don't know why I was so worried. You've made me realize that I don't have to make the right decision--at least, not right now. You've always been able to work miracles. I don't know how you do it...You're ..you're so...

LUCY: Safe.

HOWARD: Yes, that's right, safe.

(Howard and Lucy exit arm-in-arm).

(CURTAIN)

The Sentinel

Sitting solemnly
a single light
 in the window
framed in darkness
beckoning, warning
a light house
for sailors of the interstate.
I drive on
watching for rocks.

David L. Ulmer



Field of Honor

I see the sparkle in every man's eyes,
Reflections of hidden daggers they hold
And understand every man's words as lies
Because the truth I've never been told.

In lust, there's comfort and sincerity
Where play is fair on mattressed battlefields
With no expectations of charity,
False compliments or pedestaled ideals.

My mind's possessed by a man long dead,
Repeating his lies through other men.
He's possessed my eyes and entered my head--
In my confusion I see his action.

Back stabbed, I still lie bleeding and deceived
From the same man of whom I was conceived.

Elizabeth Connelly

Intrusion

Through the glass
Spring tries to invade the
Solace of the classroom.
The fingers of the sun poke
Through the fired-sand
Tickling my eyelids and
Scratching the layers of
My brain.

Noreen Van Meter



Revelation One

I am but mere existence ...
unless I open my soul
unto men.

The opening of my interior
sows bits of myself
into mankind.

Therein they are fertilized.

No longer...
mere existence.

Julia Guzman Couvillion



Who's Who

JIM AMBLER--From DeRidder, Jim is majoring in Pre-Physical Therapy. He is active in intramural sports. Art is a long-time hobby.

CHIP BAILEY--A sophomore Music major from Natchitoches, Chip enjoys sports as well as writing. He has written for newspapers in Shreveport, Baton Rouge, New Orleans, Fort Worth, and Dallas.

NOLAN BAILEY--An assistant professor in Mass Communications, Mr. Bailey is the coordinator of the NSU photography program.

TRACY BEDELL--Tracy is a freshman from Leesville majoring in Journalism. She enjoys photography and may make it her career.

VICTOR V. BRADFORD--Victor is a senior majoring in Advertising Design.

EMILY BRYANT--A junior from DeVille, Emily is majoring in Advertising Design.

DEBRA W. CLAPPER--A transplanted Texan, Debra is a sophomore majoring in Botany.

ELIZABETH CONNELLY--Elizabeth is a sophomore who has traveled a great deal and who reads, writes, and speaks Russian.

EVITA G. COUVILLION--A Theatre-Speech and English major from Alexandria, Zhan is active in NSU vocal and drama performances.

BUFFY DeVEAU--Buffy is a senior studying German and English who plans to return to Maine with her husband and daughter after graduation.

ELLEN DOLLAR--A recent graduate of Natchitoches Central, Ellen is relaxing for a semester before she starts college.

SUSAN DOLLAR--Susan is a senior with a major in both French and English Education. Recently, Susan studied and traveled in France.

DONELLE DUPREE--Donelle is a graduate student working in Recreation.

MARJORIE M. FONTENOT--Marjorie has returned to school after working for a number of years as a Certified Professional Secretary and as a real estate sales agent.

ALLEN FORD--A senior in Industrial Arts Education. Allen says he is still in pursuit of a money-making degree when not picking pecans between classes and his teeth.

SUSAN FORTENBERRY--Susan is a freshman studying Computer Science and Business.

DIANE FOSTER--Diane, who is working on her Master's degree-plus 30 in Education, has been teaching for eleven years. She enjoys photography, traveling, and sports.

VIRGINIA G. GODFREY--Enrolled at NSU as a post-graduate student, Virginia received her B.A. from SMU. She served as mayor of Many, La. for sixteen years until she retired.

LESLIE GREGORY--Leslie is a junior at Natchitoches Central who says she is mad about theatre and art and also enjoys reading.

SUSAN HAGA--Susan is an English major and French minor whose one-act play "Rockefeller Square" was produced by Showcase for New Playwrights at NSU last fall. Now she is writing a novel and a play.

R. ELAINE HALE--Elaine is a freshman majoring in Math Education.

DEBBIE HARRIS--A freshman from Baton Rouge, Debbie is interested in studying veterinary technology and history.

ROBERT J. JACKSON--From Shreveport, Robert is a senior majoring in Business Administration who likes to write poetry in his spare time.

JOHN LOFTIN--From Martin, La., John is a junior Advertising major who also works as an illustrator for the La. Dept. of Education. "Man's most important invention was not the wheel; it was the pencil," according to John.

MICHAEL MATHERNE--Michael is a graduate student in Art Education whose hobbies include photography, sailing, hiking, and drawing.

AMARYLIS T. NABAVI--A transfer student from Northeast, Amarylis was recently married and is a senior Elementary Education major.

THOMAS NAIMO--From Oakland, California, Thomas spent five years in the army. He is now a freshman in Mass Communications.

ETOILE M. NICHOLS--A retired teacher from Many, Etoile has returned to college to take creative writing.

BIRDIA PALMER--Birdia is a Business Administration sophomore whose hobbies include reading, writing, and listening to people.

MARIE PARHAM--Born and raised in Moreauville, Marie traveled through Europe and spent over a year working and studying in Israel. She is now a senior majoring in Electronics--her second degree.

JANE AMBLER PATTERSON--Graduating this semester, Jane is the current editor of **ARGUS**. A major in Business Administration Marketing, she is seriously involved in the job-hunting process.

LEE ANNE SHACKELFORD--A freshman in Equine Science who owns and shows Arabian horses, Lee Anne is from Titusville, Florida. She has had several works published previously.

KATHLEEN SMITH--Kathy is a graduate student and teaches in Goldonna. Not only a promising playwright, Kathy has a book forthcoming by the NSU Press and is at work on her first novel.

JULIET SNOWDEN--Julie, who is a sophomore at Natchitoches Central High School, started writing in second grade and had her first work published when she was twelve.

DAVID L. ULMER--David is a senior in Broadcast Communications who describes himself as being of medium height, blonde, suave, and having all his own teeth.

NOREEN DAY VAN METER--Noreen is a Registered Nurse who has returned to college for a BSN. Originally from Massachusetts, she has traveled extensively during her six years as an Air Force nurse.

LINDA ANN VERRETT--A sophomore in Mass Communicaitons, Linda is active in University Theatre productions.

LAURA E. WALL (DONELL)--Laura is a student of Nursing who has also been active in radio and television work.

JAMES WEBB--From Natchitoches, Jim is a junior majoring in Advertising Design. An art and music lover, his hobbies include photography, collecting antiques, and playing the guitar.

KENNETH WOODARD--Ken is a senior Dance major who says he enjoys exploring the various facets of personal expression, finding that with each journey he discovers a little more about himself.

PLUM WYNNE--A graduate of Sam Houston State University, Plum is now a graduate student in Art at NSU and teaches in the Natchitoches Parish Gifted and Talented Program.

Competition Winners

Argus sponsored a Literary-Art Contest last semester (Fall, 1981), and we are proud to publish each of the winning pieces in this issue.

Tracy Bedell	"Echoes of My Hometown"	Photography
Victor Bradford	"Van Daryn Studied"	Art
Chip Bailey	"The Retirement of James Petrie"	Short Story
Marjorie Fontenot	"September"	Poetry
Linda Verrett	"Summer Odyssey"	Non-fiction

Artists and writers from NSU that have contributed to **Argus** have also received awards from statewide and regional contests. Those that are presented in this issue are:

Emily Bryant	Untitled (pencil drawing of old man)	First Place, 1981 Art Show sponsored by Natchitoches Art Guild
Allen Ford	"Baby Vicious"	Second Place, Poetry, Southern Literary Festival
Kathleen Smith	"Safe"	First Place, One-act Play, Louisiana College Writers' Society Conference

Information about and entry forms for the next issue of **Argus** are available in Kyser Hall, room 316A. We're looking for suggestions, new material, new staff members, and new artists and writers to make the new **Argus** better yet.

Redmountain

lofty peaks reach
toward the sky
with all the strength
of their being

Red mountain
looms before us
challenging

a chill pervades the air we begin
the climb

with each step we discover
a part of ourselves
hidden away
and the walls fell down

the summit within reach
our purposes fulfilled
the mystery dims

an eagle
bold and proud
drawn by an unseen force
circles
flaunting his freedom

and with a surge of power, he flies
into the sun

Susan Fortenberry





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